THE MAYOR OF WINDGAP

BY

THE O'HARA FAMILY

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[4.]

THE

MAYOR OF WIND-GAP

AND

CANVASSING.

BY THE O'HARA FAMILY.

A NEW EDITION,

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

BY MICHAEL BANIM, ESQ.,

THE SURVIVOR OF THE "O'HARA FAMILY."

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JAMES DUFFY, 15, WELLINGTON-QUAY;

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INTRODUCTION

TO

"THE MAYOR OF WIND-GAP."

"THE MAYOR OF WINDGAP" was a contribution of mine to the O'Hara Tales, and sent to my brother while he was pursuing what proved to him to be, the ever-fleeting vision of health; and while he resided in Paris, under treatment of the most skilled medical men there. After undergoing a painful surgical operation at Paris, for what was now pronounced to be spinal disease, he returned to his native town, paralysed in the lower extremities, from the waist downward, his limbs hanging as useless appendages to his trunk. Our further co-operation as story-tellers, except in one succeeding instance, ceased thenceforward. On settling down at Kilkenny, he took up his residence in a cottage on the summit of the ascent of Wind-gap-hill, where the Mayor of Wind-gap had once ruled, and there he died early in life. His friends, and, indeed, his neighbours generally, called him "the Mayor of Wind-gap," and he jocosely accepted the title; the cottage where he died, from one of its windows overlooks the beautiful valley of the Nore, and, as a memorial of him, is now named "Banim Cottage."

The railroad that now passes near this cottage was not in existence at the period of his death, and the journey was made from Kilkenny to the metropolis by stage-coach. The passengers on the outside of the vehicle could look into his little flower-garden, separated from the road only by a wall. In this flower-garden he took delight, and whenever the weather was cheery, spent nearly the entire day there, seated in his bath-chair, as he superintended the cultivation of what he described as having been "painted by God to give us pleasure."

While so engaged, he was an object of curiosity to the "outsides" of the stage-coach, and the coachman, indicating him with his whip,

generally pointed him out to notice. There was one coachman in particular, who appeared to regard him as a portion of the sights to be exhibited to his travellers, and who ended his description of the show, on one occasion, by telling his listeners, in the terms of his calling, loud enough to be heard by the person pointed to, that "the poor man was booked."

My brother, when repeating this road jocularity, merely remarked: "That his exhibitor did not deserve praise for superior discrimination, when the entry on the way bill was so legible."

MICHAEL BANIM.

THE MAYOR OF WIND-GAP.

CHAPTER I.

An evening in the fine fresh month of May. Those Ephemera called, by some anglers, the May-fly, by some others the Green-Drake and by those, out of our country whatever they may choose, had emerged in great abundance from their long imprisonment beneath the waters, and were now fulfilling the purposes of their brief atmospheric life. They swarmed in the slanting sun-beams whisking their (to them) long tails, and fluttered their mottled wings, with such an appearance of thorough enjoyment, that it seemed as if their new state of being, was to be altogether devoted to worldly revelry and thoughtless love-making. In a very short time, however, the contingent and inevitable cares, to which every animate atom is liable, engrossed them. They settled down upon the water, from which they had arisen, preparing for a voyage (literally a voyage down the stream of life). Their wings, lately so alert, were, in order to serve them as sails during the voyage, soberly closed together. And as the current carried them along, they shed their ovæ upon it, that a new race might be ensured, who should frolic in the May-beam of the ensuing year. Their providential responsibility thus discharged, they drooped and died, after having been but for a few hours the denizens of the breeze, which had summoned them into their aerial existence.

While these tiny creatures made their short entrances and exits, the voracious and gigantic trout was not an idle observer of some of their motions. He gulped them down in scores in their journey upwards, from the bottom of the river, into the regions of air, and while yet unfledged for their airy gambols; or when subsequently floating on the stream in their maternal pride, he broke the water into circles, each centre of which was a little vortex, formed by

him for their annihilation. Nor was the trout the only devourer of these truly short-lived beings. The martin, the swallow, and the swift, glancing with arrowy speed through them in mid air, or over them on the river, snatched them from the very hey-day of their pastimes.

It is well known to all "brothers of the angle" that in this refreshing month of May, when the green-drake thus sails along the water, the sportsman who skilfully imitates and uses it, may expect to plod homeward after dusk, with his pannier well laden. Upon the evening then, which opens our tale, along the banks of a certain river in the south of Ireland, the most skilful deceiver of the finny tribe in the parish where he lived, pursued his recreation. Through all his operations, this individual displayed the skill of a master in his art. His fishing-rod, owing to the dexterity of his jerk, cut whistling through the calm air; his line fell smooth and straight on the stream, touching it even to a hair's breadth at the exact point he wished; and, a good copy of the green-drake powerfully aiding him, his success was equal to his adroitness. He drew forth trout after trout, in quick succession.

Maurteen Maher was rather an elderly man, yet quite alert in all his movements. He was tall and thin, with angular features, a sallow complexion, and a shrewd eye. Though many might call him ill-favoured, there was something pleasing in his smile, and repectable in the steady intelligence of his look. The general expression of his face was that of shrewd observation, with a consciousness of intellectual superiority, perhaps ostentatiously displayed. His well-combed, greyish hair fell in great profusion on his shoulders; yet he wore over it,—or rather over half of it—a wig of three buckles. His hat was very broad-brimmed; his loose outside coat had an ample cape, and was drawn and held tight round his waist by a belt of horse-skin, which also performed the duty of suspending his fishing-pannier.

In the act of extracting his favorite green-drake from a freshly-taken trout, Maurteen Maher suddenly bent his head downwards and listened.

"Aye, that's her own merry little laugh,"—he soliloquized, "and 'twould be a pity the happy heart that's in her body should ever know the blight of sorrow. Yet, for all that, as lightly as she steps along—and no bird of the spring is blither—sorrow will darken over her early, if Maurteen Maher does not stand her friend."

While he spoke these words slowly and sententiously, the object

of his smypathy appeared in view. Although at the beginning of his soliloquy his acute ear had distinguished her approach by the cadence of her laugh, they had at the moment been hidden from each other by a sudden sinuosity of the river, curving with the curve of the flowery bank by which it wandered. Now, as he discovered her at a distance, Maurteen looked steadily towards the owner of "the happy little heart," and continued talking to himself.—

"The boy is at her side of a surety—and tisn't the running wather, nor the May-bush full of its blossom that he cares to be looking on. No—he's looking into her eyes to know if the love is there. Tisn't the song of the thrush nor the note of the sky-lark above his head, that he's giving ear to; no—he hears nothing but her silver little voice, that turns all she spakes into music. She's joking at him, I see. Och! aye. But the glance she gives to him, and the smile that's on her lips, don't mane to tell us that she's so hard-hearted entirely. It is just the way I thought it was. He's not the shape of a *gorsoon* a girl would darken her brow at.—Sure, if it's a thing that a purty creature in the bloom of her beauty makes a boy's heart leap with joy, a young colleen may like the lad that's comely and goes brave. Aye; that's a story of ould standing, as ould as the time that Adam used to be coorting Eve, long ago. But I'll tell ye my notion; if the good luck happened that our great-grandmother, Mistress Eve, was an ugly ould crature with winkers on her face, and no teeth in her gums,—when poor Adam first set his eye upon her, by my good troth, we'd be in Paradise this blessed day. The poor fool of a gardener would never be ating that misfortunate apple, for an ould *colloch's* bidding, I'll be bound."

The persons thus commented on by Maurteen Maher, were a girl of twenty, and a youth perhaps a year older. Judging by their dress, their manners, and their bearing, they belonged to the better class of society. We have never pretended to much talent in describing female beauty. In the present instance, however, it is no difficult task to say that Annie Kennedy was somewhat below the middle stature; of a perfect symmetry of shape, with a complexion, clear and fresh, yet wanting the milkmaid's too palpable bloom—

"The rose insensibly mingling with the lily,"

as young ladies love to write it. It is quite as easy to declare that she possessed dark eyes, of which every glance shot through merriest sunshine, that her lips were red and pouting, yet not very saucily so; that, anticipating her constant smile, there were courier-

dimples near the corners of her mouth; that in the centre of her chin there was a mark—

"Love's dimpling finger did impress;"

that, from beneath her large-leafed, low-crowned, black silk hat, her hair fell,

"In jetty ringlets on her snowy neck,"

aye, and sometimes wantoned over her shoulders; that her waist was tiny—for in those days young girls (and sometimes old ones too) laced themselves as tightly as they do in our own day; and that her little mouse-like feet hid themselves in shoes of which the heels were nearly three inches high, but which still did not succeed in spoiling the symmetry of the exceedingly pretty objects they covered. We have presumed to say, that there would be no difficulty in mentioning these things. But we own to ourselves that we must fail in any effort to give an idea of the guileless happiness, the sparkling, yet half-childish play of mind, that snatched merriment from every object. Withal, the scarce-hidden consciousness of superior beauty, and the youthful avidity to exact the tributes of its conquering influence, which were visible in face and air.

Maurteen Maher has called Annie's companion "a gorsoon that a young colleen would not darken her brow at." We think he was right. The lover's hair, as well as his misthress's, was very dark, his face oval, and rather pale; his glance quick, frank, and of strong manly character; his lip curving beautifully, whether in sternness or in smiles;—his person finely formed. There was in his look, his air, his manner, his most ordinary address, a depth, an ardency and yet great openness of expression. From the manifestations of his mere exterior, he seemed to be a man who felt every thing intensely. At present, even under the softening influence of the universal conqueror,—he was more self-absorbed than any thing else. To be sure, the innocent lamb could not seem to be (if it ever has seemed any thing it was not) more gentle than he appeared to Annie. And never could George Blundell have uttered gentler, or more timid, or even more slavish sounds, than those to which his handsome mouth now gave utterance; never could his manly glance been more tender—more subdued.

Although Annie Kennedy loved her tamed enthusiast, still, prompted by the pleasant consciousness of beauty and of power, she sported with him. From this we infer that she never reflected

how fiery a nature, passionate for good or evil, might be combined with his silky mildness of demeanour towards herself. But in truth, the effect upon him of her merely arch equivocations was, could she have understood it, something that she would not have provoked. The young man hoped, and feared, doubted, and felt certain; triumphed, and desponded; was raised to ecstasy, or lowered to misery. All of which so fretted and fevered him, as to make George Blundell a very incompetent person to engage in other matters of life, with the calmness of mind, and the precision of action, necessary for honourable success.

"In good truth, Mr. George Blundell," said Annie, and as she spoke, she gave her head a littte coquettish toss, that caused to gambol over their resting-place the ringlets which flowed to her neck—assuming, at the same time, a mock gravity of aspect, and yet turning the full glory of her glance upon her impatient, though obsequious, victim. "In good truth, Mr George Blundell, there is something questionable in your conduct."

"Something questionable in my conduct, Annie? Good Heaven,—of what can you suspect me, unworthy of the —— I mean, do you suppose I could be capable, in the slightest degree, of conceiving an idea of acting, in the most trifling matter, so as to give you—the least reason to—"

"Reason to think that you have been stringing together the most absurd set of words I have ever listened to? That's something questionable, is it not?"—she laughed.

He, too, tried to laugh. "Annie," said he, pathetically, "dear Annie, can you be serious for one minute?"

"Serious? no, indeed! Serious I cannot be—serious I will not be; this is not the season for being serious; for hanging down the head and looking dull. No, Sir. Come to me, and ask me to be serious, when the sky lowers—when the blast shakes doors and windows—when the sleet darkens the cheery sun—when our poor cat mopes at the hearth, and my little dog lies shivering on his cushion—(see how he frisks before me *now!*)—Mr. George Blundell, I am not made to be serious while the lark is soaring above me, filling the air and my little ear with his trumpet-like melody." She took the "little ear" next her lover between her finger and thumb, and held it towards him a moment, and when she felt satisfied he had had time to appreciate its tiny shape and roseate tinting, she continued in her former strain—"While the little bubbling billows of the stream dance to his music, in the light of the setting sun;

while the swallow darts by me, twittering out his evening song; while the fresh breeze flirts with my cheek—"

"Ah!" sighed Mr. George Blundell, in a very long sigh—"That's a happy breeze, Annie!"

"To be sure it is! And it is so, because it is not serious. Look, Sir, look!"—and she touched his arm, and pointed across the river to a sloping meadow, with such sudden energy, that not only George Blundell, but also her faithful maid in waiting, close behind them, looked eagerly as if something startling was expected to be seen.

"See, how it frolics yonder, through the yet green hay! *That* has always pleased me, for it is always seen when lovely spring is at her full. Do you know, to my fancy, the earnest breeze sometimes appears in positive shape, as it skims over the tender meadow—"

"Darling Annie!—how beautiful and true every thing is when you describe it."

She laughed again most saucily, while she chattered on—

"And do you think, Master George Blundell, so foolishly of us feminines, as not to have known beforehand that it was to make you admire *me*, as well as the meadow, that I described it so beautifully? Look again, Sir!—I intend that you shall admire me a second time, by making you condescend to admire what God has here strewn around our path, for every one's admiration. See those *not*-serious little birds, hopping and chirping from bough to bough—"

"Ah!" again sighed Mr. George Blundell, "those little birds hop and chirp from bough to bough with nature's full permission to be happy. For, Annie, all those beautiful little creatures, so frolicsome in the light of this May evening, are happy lovers, with their beloved ones—"

"Well," interrupted Annie, "they make love merrily, do they not? Can you see long faces on them? or can you call their accents dolorous?" To this second little appeal her stupid companion was so insensible that he only began to muster up one of his long-drawn sighs, when Annie and he, suddenly turning the elbow of the bank before alluded to, came almost in personal contact with Maurteen Maher, whom the young lady immediately accosted.

"I wish you a good evening, Maurteen."

"*Cead mille beeachus!** my purty young lady. And I wish

* A hundred thousand blessings.

for you that seventy-seven May-suns, like the pleasant sun of this blessed evening, may put the white blossom on the thorn-bush to give you pleasure, and open the flowers under your feet. And that to the last minute of time, that you may find it in your heart to be happy on a May-path."

"I thank you," said Annie, whole-laughing yet half-grave, for old Maurteen's address had pathos in it. "I thank you heartily and sincerely, my good friend."

"Don't be thanking me at all, my blooming daisy. An ould man's words, be they ever so civil, are could and damp to the heart of the young, and the good, and the comely. But the kind salutation from the lips of the young, and the good, and the comely, cheers the heart of the ould man, as if he sat fornent the breeze that blows from the rose-bush."

"On my word, Maurteen, *you* are a very gallant, poetical old man, and know how to flatter to some purpose."

"When the snow and the sleet falls, my purty crature, I feel the years heavy upon me; when the May shines out, they are not so weighty to my shoulders. And the smiling of your cheerful face, blessings upon it, is as pleasant to me as the blithest day of the spring-time."

"Positively you will turn my head, good Father."

"No danger in the world of that, my purty crature. The poor head, God help it, thinks it's full of wisdom; but the heart is cuter, and makes a fool of it, for all that. Aye, and your own handsome head would go on turning to the side where your heart turns, this moment, if every word out of my mouth was a costly jewel."

"Only that you are a privileged old friend, Maurteen Maher, I'd—"

"And I'd make a wager of a silver sixpence, you know right well I'm spaking the sound sinse, purty lady. Well, if the brave young gentleman who has won the prize, doesn't jump sky-high for his fortune, Mostha! he's an ouldher man nor I am."

As Maurteen Maher said this, he glanced archly at George Blundell. But before the blush had passed from Annie's face, the angler was crying out in the utmost ecstasy—"I'm in him!—I'm in him, your sowl!—I'm in him!"

Himself and the reel of his fishing-rod seemed to have been seized with a sudden frenzy. The latter whizzed violently, as it spun round and round, apparently of its own accord, and its handle revolved so rapidly that its motion was scarce perceptible; at the same instant, Maurteen Maher ran eagerly along the bank of the

river, his distended eyes fixed on the water: anon he stopped suddenly, hurried back the way he had come, then down again, then up again, every muscle of his face and person in a state of excitement.

Annie, who had never before seen an angler engaged in the crisis of his sport, thought Maurteen mad—poetical she had before deemed him. But when shortly after, she saw a fish spring many feet out of the water, near the opposite bank, she vaguely conjectured that there must be some sympathy between it and her late flatterer. For at sight of it Maurteen jumped high too, crying out in the greatest glee—

"*A sieve-maker!* by my conscience—*a sieve-maker*, every inch of him."

George Blundell, occasionally an angler himself, knew more of those proceedings than did his fair mistress, and, to her increased astonishment, sympathized with them. Hurrying to his brother of the art, he snatched the landing-net out of his left hand, ran after him as he ran up and down, here and there—and with bent body and eager eye, prepared to raise the trout from its native element. The poor victim of Maurteen's green-drake, while its strength continued equal to its astonishment, fluttered or darted through the river: gradually exhausted and passive, it opposed little resistance to its captor's cautious effort to wheel it nearer and nearer, till at length quite weary, and now lying close under him, it seemed to invite George Blundell to put forth the net.

"Be sure of what you are about!" commanded Maurteen loudly. "Make no plunges at him!—Have a care there!—have a care, I bid ye!—Would he be off again?—troth, and I'll take care he shan't if I can help it—Now, have a caution what you're at!—here he comes, like a May-boy—dip the net—*dip* it under him, I say—no plunging at him—Blur-an-ages! Aisy now—aisy!—watch your work now, I tell you!—now—now—that's it." And George Blundell succeeded in getting into the net he held a fine trout of five pounds weight.

Annie approached as Maurteen Maher flung the now lifeless fish on the grass. "The beautiful creature! the poor innocent thing!" she cried, with tears in her eyes. "Oh! how cruel is your sport, good man."

"The poor innocent thing you call him, my purty lady? I never met a greater rogue of a sieve-maker, since I first wetted a line. Did ye mind how he strove by main force to get me round that stump and make geomethries of me?"

"To get you round a stump, and make geometries of you?" asked Annie, smiles already beaming through her tears. "Now, that's something more abstruse than geometry itself, to poor me."

"He means, Annie," said George Blundell, whose tone and looks cunningly made even this explanation sound loving, "that the fish, by his doublings and twinings, had nearly fastened his line to the stump of a tree. Which event, had it really occurred, must have caused the line to snap, and the trout to escape."

"I wish from my heart it had so happened," said Annie, with fervour. "He calls it by an odd kind of name, a sieve-maker, I think—I should suppose that means a large trout?"

"And a large trout it is, Annie. Once upon a time, you must know, a person who followed the trade of a sieve-maker, was remarkably fortunate in taking the largest fish in the river, and since his immortal day, his professional name is given to all trouts of an unusual size."

"You told me, purty lady," resumed Maurteen Maher, "that I have a cruel way of divarting myself. Now, it's mighty plain to know that a good throut, with a big body and a weechy head, a bowed back, and spots on his side as big as half-crown pieces, makes very good food for poor Christians. Besides, little and big as they all are together, they were bred and born and brought up in this river for people to ate. Moreover again, all living things make out their life by ating one another, barring they'd be sheep or cows, or bastes of that sort; sure *we* ate *them* that ate only the grass. And, as harmless as you take that fish to be, there's more than two good hundred of *green-drakes* in his craw this moment; he swallowed them down alive as they sailed on the wather. He was like many of this world's rogues, enough wouldn't satisfy him, but he must be greedy for more—so he thought to plundher me of my poor *green-drake*, never dhramin' that he'd swallow the hook along with it."

"And these little things tied to your line, you call them green-drakes—why so?" queried Annie.

"Yes. And I call that tail-fly my desthroyer, little lady. That middle one my tongue-tickler. And the next to that agin, my snout-snapper."

Annie was engaged examining these oddly named baits, when, at a little distance down the river, where the rapid which rippled by them terminated in a deep, still pool, a heavy plunge was heard. A ragged young urchin had ascended a tree which overhung the water; the branch on which he would have made an ex-

cursion snapped across, and headlong downwards he was precipitated, shrieking vigorously as he fell. George Blundell darted to the spot. On his arrival at the faithless tree, the boy was beating the water with his arms, gasping, and at intervals, still crying out piteously. Suddenly, the water whirled round him, and he diappeared beneath it. George only waited to pull off his coat and shoes, and then dashed in. As he reached the still circling surface of the spot where the boy had sunk, the drowning creature suddenly emerged close to him, and at once grappled with his self-destined preserver.

"Knock him from you, or ye're both lost!" shouted Maurteen Maher, from the bank immediately above them, whither he had followed, with the trembling Annie and her hand-clapping and loud-screaming attendant, whom we believe we have hitherto rudely forgotten to notice.

George Blundell was evidently conscious of his danger; he used every effort to disengage himself. He succeeded in freeing the wrist which had been particularly seized, but as the desperate boy again was sinking, he locked his arms firmly around the young man's legs; and the sensation produced by the act was terrible. He felt himself dragged downwards; he struggled with all his force, but in vain; the despairing grasp still clutched him, like a paralysis. He was sinking rapidly: a cry of horror escaped him—down, down he was dragged—he turned his look towards the bank. He caught a vague vision of Annie stretching her arms towards him; in another instant, he was lost to her view, and he did not hear the low piteous shriek which escaped his hitherto coquetting mistress. The water of the deep pool for an instant quivered over him, and then settled into its usual placid stillness, as innocent of the doom it had occasioned.

Scream after scream had burst from Annie; now she became at once motionless and silent. The surface of the water was again broken; her lover appeared above it. She shouted out his name; he looked hastily and wildly around him; he fixed his eyes more meaningly upon her; he waved his right hand towards her, and dived downwards, a second time disappearing, but now voluntarily, from her eyes.

Again she looked on the unbroken water without uttering a sound. George almost immediately re-emerged, clasping tightly to him, with one arm, the stiffened body of the boy; while with the other he struck feebly for the bank. He reached it, however, safely. Old Maurteen Maher, bending down from its edge, lifted up with

difficulty, the prize which his young friend extended towards him. George himself wearily scrambled to the green sod, and there sank down exhausted. Annie sprang to his side. She knelt over him, rubbed his cold and languid hands, his chilled forehead, and pallid cheeks. Nay, she even kissed his forehead, and laughing and crying together, called him "her own George, her own dear George," and at last, "her own dear, dear, darling George!" and asked him to live, "to live for her sake." And, as the young man became feebler, she repeated these expressions again and again in his ears; now unconsciously resting on her knee his drooping, and indeed, very dripping, head. He certainly did not hear her first words; but we half suspect that George Blundell treacherously feigned insensibility for a little time, after he had comprehended her repetitions of them. At all events, he at last opened his eyes. Annie's little hand touched his cheeks, her warm loving tears dropped upon his chilled and half-dead face. He turned his look upwards, and, in the idiom of a true young Irish lover, of his years and time, said—

"Ever and ever, blessed be this evening! For it hears Annie tell me that she loves me!"

Although blushing to the utmost tint of a blush, Annie bent her lips to his ear, and calling him brave, and benevolent, and charitable, and generous, with many other flattering epithets, softly repeated her assurance of affection.

George Blundell bounded to his feet, a much happier man than he had been before he was half drowned. The birds he had so lately envied for their "hopping and chirping," and so forth, he now seemed to despise, by the superlatively hopping and chirping way in which he walked homewards by the side of Annie Kennedy. Nor was his happiness altogether selfish. He felt that he had successfully ventured his own life, to save that of a very humble and insignificant human creature, and this thought added elasticity to his limbs, and triumphant brightness to his eye.

Maurteen Maher, with the little tatterdemalion in his arms, now also reviving as well as he could, slowly advanced to the young pair, and addressed them.

"May the good God give you his blessing this evening, young gentleman! You have a brave and a feeling heart—it will never pass from my mind that I saw you rising from the jaws of death, and then diving into them again, of your own accord, because you would not save yourself alone, and lave this little crature to lie stiff on the bottom of the river. He is the son of a neighbour of

mine—of one that's dearer than a neighbour: he left his home with me this evening, to play at my side; but I b'lieve I forgot him, when I hooked the sieve-maker. 'Twould be a woful tale for me to tell, among the people that love him, that I left him a corpse under the water. I strolled down here this evening, may be to have an eye on you both, as well as to thry the luck o' the green-drake; and, may be, for my own reasons. I had a regard for one and the other of you, beforehand; but, from this evening out, I'll sthrive to be your friend agin' the world. I wouldn't put a chill upon your young sperrits, by saying that there's a danger upon your road. But if mischief or ill-fortune overtakes you—listen to me. At the very time you want a helpin' hand, bring to your minds the ould Fisherman you met here this May-evening. Ye may have worse friends, or ye may have as thrue friends, but less able to do ye a sarvice, than Maurteen Maher, the Mayor of Wind-gap."

CHAPTER II.

MAURTEEN MAHER, when promising his protection to the lovers, Annie Kennedy and George Blundell, made his tender of patronage with great cordiality and blandness of manner: there was at the same time, as he stretched forth his right arm and open palm towards them, an assumption, as it were, of power to redeem his pledge. He announced himself, it will be remembered, as "Mayor of Wind-gap," and we feel bound to show that his was not a mere empty title.

At the time of our story, the only entrance from the metropolis to a well known city in the south of Ireland, was along a road which descended almost precipitately from one of its suburbs. Let us pause a moment near a stile in the boundary wall of this road, and take a glance below us and around us.

There is a beautiful river a considerable depth beneath our place of observation—this river flows towards us. Looking townwards it is at the farthest point of vision, "glassy water," smooth and placid as a mirror, dimly imaging its banks and overshadowing trees, and darkened by the reflexion of the massive feudal edifice towering high above it. This lordly structure crowns the left bank

of our "glassy water;" to the right it steals round a promontory of greenest verdure, studded with noble trees. The shadow of the building on the height beyond does not fall entirely across, and the sunbeam brightens the green of the grassy promontory, and enlightens the edge of the mirror there. Looking nearer, the smoothly flowing water is disrupted; it falls in a liquid sheet over a semicircular mill-weir; it rushes on for a short space, babbling and eddying—but immediately beneath us, it has again resumed its placid character, and as it flows noiselessly it is again a water mirror, throwing up to us, as we look down, the blue and white sky, and the foliage on its banks. A little farther on, and we see it tumbling over a second barrier, similar to the former, and then we lose sight of it as it gambols from us—the musical clamor of its last descent ascending up to us where we stand.

Looking towards our city, which is to our right in the valley beneath us, we see the blue slated roofs of the houses: above these, at different points, rise the cupola of the town-hall, the spire of a church, and numerous ivy-crowned towers and ruins of churches and monasteries of the olden time; these latter imparting an air of reverend antiquity, picturesque even in decay. As we look we receive no idea of the streets, or lanes, or alleys of a populous town. Houses, and cupola, and ruined towers, and crumbling monasteries seem to be embowered in trees, from which they here and there emerge.

The stately feudal building casting its shadow on the mirror below it, bounds our town view on the one hand; an old cathedral on an eminence, with its adjunct round tower, bounds it at the other extremity—the latter rising above a mass of foliage.

In the middle distance, beyond the river and fronting us, there is a rich country of meadow-land and tillage; there are near hills, to which the land rises; and there are distant blue mountains framing in the picture.

The spot from which we have taken this glance at our southern Irish city was, and is still, named Wind-gap—and good reason there was, and is, why so called. No matter from what point of the compass the wind blew, whether from the gloomy south, hurrying along with it the black rack, surcharged with vapour and rain; or from the boisterous north, whirling before it sleet, hail, or frost; or from the pinching east, scattering the snow-flake; or from the south-west, driving on the hurricane; it was all the same. Every blast was sure to avail itself of this passage into the town. Hence the place obtained the appellation of the Wind-gap. A

name it still holds, and must retain, until the various currents of air cease to whistle, to howl, to puff and to bluster, from each nook and corner of the earth's atmosphere.

Uninviting, however, as the situation may appear, a range of thatched houses, stretched up and over the ascending road, and, at the time of which we speak, in greater numbers than at the present day. Why sensible people should have chosen Wind-gap as an abode, we are not exactly aware. Perhaps they set off the salubrity of their air, during some parts of the year, against its roughness during others. However this may be, the inhabitants of Wind-gap were attached to their boisterous suburb. They even boasted that it conferred the rare gift of longevity ; for if their blasts chilled, they also braced. In sooth, the place could number more aged inhabitants than any other outlet, even of a city proverbial for "air without fog."

But the winter was now gone by. Spring too, had passed over, and mid-summer was shedding its full effulgence on the good people of Wind-gap. And this latter is the time of the year at which we choose to make the reader acquainted with the more important personages among them.

It was the eve of the twenty-fourth of June, about fifty-five years ago. All Irish readers pretty well know that it has been the practice, time immemorial, of the humbler classes, upon this night, to kindle bonfires throughout the country. We have read many learned discussions touching the origin of this custom ; notwithstanding which, and contrary to the nature of the theme, or at least of its object, we have been left as much in the dark as ever. Whether the lighting of bonfires on St. John's Eve be a remnant of Pagan rites, by which our ancestors sacrificed to the palpable deity of the earth, the dispenser of light and heat, or whether it be a custom of more recent origin, we honestly admit, we cannot say. Nor shall we pause to submit any grave surmises on the matter. The people themselves, who are the actual incendiaries, can give no rational account of the meaning of what they do.

The unxeplained practice is, while we write, lamentably fallen into decay, like many similar and even more intelligible ones.—But the bonfires of the twenty-third of June, 1779, in and around our city, blazed grandly and numerously. To whatever point of the suburbs, or of the distant country, the citizen turned his glance—along the high road, or at the corner of cross-roads, or in the bottoms of the remote valleys, or upon the bosoms of still more distant hills,—columns of flame arose. Even in the streets of his town, the

houses seemed red-hot, from the flaming upon them of vast fires, composed of furze, cows' horns, bones, tar-barrels, sugar-barrels, trunks or branches of trees, and all other combustibles that could not be called staple consumption for the thrifty domestic hearths of the place.

Within and without, and far, far beyond our city, all was rejoicing glare. Yet, to the honour of Wind-gap be it recorded, the bonfire upon its height was brilliant beyond comparison: honour, indeed, its inhabitants expected and received from the circumstance;—a reflected glory proportioned to the magnificence of their conflagration. Many battles had been fought between "the boys of Wind-gap," (the elderly men were termed boys, along with the rest,) and the other boys of other outlets, in sallies after necessary materials. In all such rencounters, the former had been victors, dragging up with shouts of victory, to the topmost point of their high ground, abundance of every thing required for a bonfire of gigantic dimensions.

The long-wished-for evening fell. The pile was heaped, the brand was applied to it: as its flames shot up, "even into the shkie," young and old, man and woman, maid and widow, boy and girl, and child, sent after it a cloud-cleaving shout of exultation.

At this crisis of the mystical festivity, a fellow uncouthly swathed from his neck to his heels in twisted straw ropes, wearing a ridiculous mask, and wielding a stick with a puffed bladder tied to its extremity, flapped and banged his way through the motley crowd with as much agility as his cumbrous clothing would permit. Indeed, he resembled a great, half-tamed, dancing bear. He was followed by another man of proportions as muscular as his own, fantastically dressed in female attire, also wearing a grotesquely terrific mask, and armed in the same manner as his supposed protector. This absurd pair dashed through the shouting throng, dealing indiscriminately their blows on every head, which blows, like the words of a babbling tongue, were more noisy than mischievous. The people, however, half of their own accord, ran here and there, pursued by their two grotesque sergeants-at-arms, until these active police of Wind-gap had ranged them to their satisfaction. After a little time, order was restored, and the proceedings of the night went forward with official regularity.

At one side, where a line of temporary benches covered with green sods had been erected for the occasion, sat the more aged portion of the men of Wind-gap. Squatted on the ground below them, were ranged, dressed in their best high-cauled caps, and holiday gar-

ments, the as elderly females of the principality. Half-a-dozen Sycamore chairs, placed near the benches, were occupied by as many grey-headed, sage-looking, and very old men. Opposite to those gathered the promiscuous group of every inferior age or degree (for age *meant* degree) of the dwellers of the place.

The foolish fellow armoured in straw, and the swaggering, unfeminine, would-be-female, his companion, strode up and down, pummelling all who did not assume attitudes and faces of the required gravity; at the same time that their own grotesque tricks abundantly caused the loud merriment they affected to discountenance. The glare of the bonfire shot in between the seated elders and the confronting throngs. So that the faces of all glowed like heated metal, while their backs remained in black shadow.

The mumming fool in straw approached the old men seated on the chairs, flourished his stick with its appendage, struck the latter against the ground, and attempted a few unwieldy movements. An aged man arose and came forward.

"Neighbours all, both the ould and the young o' ye, listen to the words from my mouth. The fire is blazing for the mid-summer: the Eve of St. John's-day is come round to us again, praise be given above for the blessin' of another year. We are behouldin' to choose a Mayor of Wind-gap, for the year that's afore us. Fifteen mid-summer nights are come and gone since the same man first had the Mayorship of rule and sway over us. To this hour he has kept the pace an' the Christian good-will inside our dours, and outside our thrasholds; quashing down scrimmages, and 'ructions, makin' a settlement of all our quarrels, an' keepin' us out of the law of the town below there, that might bring the *Meeroch* * on us, if we had any thing to do it. Honest neighbours that hearken to me, my word goes for it; that a more honester or a more worshipfuller Mayor nor Maurteen Maher couldn't hould the sway on Wind-gap."

Like other reporters of popular oratory, we might have broken up this speech with many parenthetical cheers: the spokesman and his subject are as much favourites of ours as any other public speaker ever has been in the eyes of our brethren. We think, however, that we show more real art by keeping our whole volley of hurrahs for the close of the oration; and by declaring with strict truth, that the air was rent, after our friend sat down, with shouts of every calibre. The next instant Maurteen Maher, by public acclamation, was re-elected mayor of Wind-gap.

* Ill-luck.

Maurteen had been seated on one of the Sycamore chairs before spoken of: he now stood up. The oldest man of the assembly, one almost bent double with age, came to his side, and placed a long osier wand, peeled white, in his Worship's right hand.

"Will you make promise before the neighbours to be the honest, fair Judge among us, and to dale out the thrue Justice on Wind-gap hill?" queried his ancient installer.

"I'll do my duty like a thrue honest man," responded Maurteen Maher.

"Neighbours, do ye make promise to be loyal and dutiful to your Mayor?" demanded the same aged person of the assembled crowd.

"Loyal and dutiful!" shouted all.

"The chair, the chair!" was now the cry.

A large, two-armed, wicker chair was brought forward. To its sides were nailed loops of leather; through these, strong poles were put. With perfect gravity of manner, Maurteen Maher took his seat, clutching in his right hand his long wand of office, and in the other a huge nosegay. His subjects seized the poles, mounted them on their shoulders, and, preceded by a piper and a fiddler, the Mayor of Wind-gap was thrice borne round the bonfire, to which, during his progress, many faggots of furze, innumerable cows'-horns, half the trunk of a goodly tree, and the entire skeleton of a horse, were added, for the purpose of conferring a kind of glory upon his inauguration, as well as of exciting the new and excelling shouts which attested it.

The Mayor's chair was then placed on a turfy eminence raised above the grassy bench before described. A foaming brown pitcher of home-brewed ale was handed to him; he quaffed it, wishing the "shadhurth," * to all around him. And then the vessel was passed on, of course after having been replenished, while each prayed a long reign for their newly and curiously elected civic magistrate.

Maurteen Maher arose. Amidst all this half farcical, half serious scene, profound silence ensued.

"It is in the knowledge of all o' ye, neighbours," he said, "that sence the first time ye made me Mayor of Wind-gap, 'tis my rule to choose my council, that wid their help, I may give good advice to ye, on hard points. The same council that I called the first year o' my Mayorship, I'll call this present year. Shawn Leeach and Gregory Roche, take your places."

Shawn Leeach, the very old man who, as it may be said, had

* Good health.

sworn in the Mayor, and Gregory Roche, one not much younger, very demurely took their stations, the one at his right hand, the other at his left.

"Shawn Leeach and Gregory Roche," continued Maurteen, "ye are the Mayor's council for the year to come: no man is to gainsay our judgments, upon the peril of being put out of good fellowship with his neighbours. Come before my face, Meehawl O'Moore."

The hitherto merely foolish fellow, in the case of straw, waddled towards his Worship's chair.

"Meehawl O'Moore, I put you in the post of the Mayor's bailiff. I give you the power to disthrain and to make disthress, under the ordher of the Mayor's Coort of Wind-gap. Are ye all content, and do ye know your own minds, this St. John's-eve—that Meehawl O'Moore should have this place over ye, by ordher o' the Coort?"

It was curious that the boisterously inclined crowd wore really serious faces, while they answered to this question in the affirmative.

"Well, then," rejoined Maurteen, "my hearty neighbours, let the dance go on, and the *Shannachus* * be tould, and let the good Sheebeen be dhrunk, till the fire burns down, and the † colloch's hour comes. Meehawl O'Moore keep the ring reg'lar. Keep the gorsoons on their good behav'er to the colleens. Keep the *Sheebeen* rangin' its rounds in rason. Let no one pass the gap widout payin' the towl. ‡ If there's any unruly doin's or pickin' of quarrels, or any undacent conduct, bring the offendher before me. And so, neighbours, *Sha-dhurth* to ye agin; and hearty and prosperous may we all be, man, woman, and child, ould and young, until St. John's-eve comes round to us the next year."

The Mayor took another willing draught. New cheers were given at the close of his harangue; more faggots and other combustibles were thrown on the fire. The piper and the fiddler, preceded and followed by the "boys and girls," adjourned to an adjacent level spot, under the clamorous direction of Meehawl O'Moore; and the dance quickly commenced with all the life and vigour for which Irish "boys and girls" are so justly celebrated.

Maurteen Maher possessed his osier arm-chair in quiet dignity: his council placed their lesser chairs at his right and at his left: the other old men, and all the old women, kept their former stations. The *weenocks* sat in a ring round the blaze, and began plays suitable to their age. Over the whole Maurteen kept his eye of autho-

* Agreeable gossip, † Old woman's hour.
‡ Toll;—toll for the bonfire.

rity, ordaining order, encouraging amusement, talking "Shannachus;" occasionally tasting his sheebeen; commanding that the same beverage should moisten the piper's chanter, rosin the fiddler's bow, give to the dancers' feet spirit for their pastime, and—(superfluous injunction!) oil the well-practised tongues of the old women seated near his chair.

We end the chapter by saying that this local practice of electing a "Mayor of Wind-gap," is only taken from the traditional authority of the place, (which however is not to be questioned) and can by no means apply generally to the peculiarities of the Irish people.

CHAPTER III.

MAURTEEN MAHER was a man between fifty and sixty; an old bachelor, and otherwise unburthened with family cares. During his whole life he had never devoted himself to any regular occupation; yet he was decently independent through his cleverness in many ways. He could weave baskets, and *skeechs* and *kishes;* he cultivated a small garden of osiers, to supply him with materials for this branch of his handicraft; the sheebeen, brewed from malt of his drying, had a peculiar and highly relished flavour; he was an eminent ornamental thatcher; he could mend shoes, make fishing-nets, and fishing-flies and lines, and do an odd job as a carpenter; he could turn wooden trenchers, *thurgeens*, or caulcannon-pounders,* and such household furniture. And he professed divers other branches of artisan accomplishments.

Yet to none of his avocations would he continuously or diligently devote himself. He took up all by fits and starts, and would often abandon them altogether when the spring-breeze invited him to the river side, to pursue his favourite recreation of angling. Of this sport he was passionately fond; and in the successful pursuit of it, not one of his fishing brethren, who frequented the banks of the clear stream, which flowed through the valley beneath his hill, could compete with Maurteen. His varied talents necessarily claimed respect, and Maurteen himself was by no means backward in assum-

* Scotch—*kail*cannon.

ing among his compeers an air of self-importance, proportioned to their admissions of his superiority. He possessed, however, a shrewd understanding, and, as the neighbours said, had "dacent manners and a handy tongue in his head." Such had been his admitted character from youth to manhood. As he advanced in years, he became still more looked up to. On all knotty points his opinion was consulted, and gradually became decisive of the matter at issue. This homage half spoiled Maurteen; a real dictatorship of manner grew upon him. He claimed the foremost place in all discussions, no matter upon what subject; domestic as regarded Wind-gap, or foreign as regarded "the town below," and which he was pleased to consider as a mere appendage to his own dominions. Sometimes his loud and oracular delivery became ridiculed; but he looked superciliously on the scoffers, and turned his back on them, as quite unworthy of notice.

Maurteen monopolized, among other things, the management of bonfires, of May-bushes, of May-poles, and of all such illustrations of periodical festivities. Once, upon a St. John's-eve, while the bonfire blazed brightly, partly as a frolic of the moment, and partly as a real acknowledgment of his great talents and efficient services, the "boys of the place" took him upon their shoulders, pranced under him round it, and appointed him to the mock-office of Mayor. Maurteen Maher's face was the only one which wore no smile on the occasion; and it was soon perceived that he took the freak more seriously than it had been intended.

His people were surprised to find, that after this night he poked himself more actively than ever into all their disputes and slightest differences; arrogating, by virtue of his recent appointment, the exclusive right of deciding between them. At first they indulged the usurpation "for the fun of the joke," at the same time being obliged to admit that Maurteen's verdicts often saved them from lawsuits in the town, and from internal feuds and bickerings. At the next bonfire, (but now as much by matter of course as to renew the frolic,) he was re-installed in office;—and for this occasion his own hands had constructed an awful-looking wicker chair—the same in which, fifteen years after its manufacture, we have just seen him paraded round the fire. It was now that he called upon the two most intelligent men of his neighbourhood to assist him with their advice in the dispensation of his authority, and these he styled "the Mayor's council." He also appointed a bailiff to carry his and their decrees into effect. And thenceforward, without a sneer or a witticism against him, even from the most witty, or the most sneering,

Maurteen Maher obtained power, and preserved peace and goodwill among his subjects. If a debt were owing from one to another, he arranged the time and manner of its payment. If the boundaries of a garden were disputed between two neighbours, a matter frequently occurring on an almost unclaimed common, where no fences, nor other lines of partition, had previously been established, he called in "his council;" with them viewed the premises, and pointed out to each claimant his decreed portion. If trespass were committed by swine or cattle, he assessed the damages perpetrated. And all his judgments were acceded to, not only submissively, but pleasurably; the good people of Wind-gap agreeing among themselves that a man of clearer intellect, of superior genius, or of more impartial justice, could not preside over their affairs. It became a matter of course that his decisions were implicitly obeyed, much to the diminution of the fees of the real Mayor's office, legally established in the city below the hill of Wind-gap.

If fines or debts were to be recovered under his authority, and that payment was not forthcoming, he never failed to exact it. Meehawl O'Moore, his bailiff, was a ranting, rattling, laughing fellow, who obeyed the Mayor's orders for the joke's sake, careless of consequences. He would seize on some piece of household furniture, and carry it to his Worship the Mayor, who retained it until it was redeemed. And another thing may have confirmed Maurteen in his authority. Namely, that the whole community which he thus usurpingly governed, felt and acknowledged his general utility, in handicraft pursuits, much too convincingly to offend even a public tyrant, if such Maurteen Maher could have been, at the risk of getting rid of the advantages resulting from his individual talents.

His worship had shewn good discrimination in the choice of his council. Gregory Roche was the weaver of Wind-gap. Fifty-six years ago, the woman who neglected to commence the manufacture of the linen of her own household would have been deemed an unthrifty person. In every dwelling the buzz of the spinning-wheel was heard during the long winter-nights; and it was the companion of the *vanithee* in the open air, outside the door, on a summer's evening. The weaver was therefore kept in good and respectable employment, and could live rather aristocratically. But, along with the consideration due to him, as an expert and cunning artist, Gregory Roche commanded deference as a man of superior manners and acquirements. He had read books, and was considered oracular on all grand historic points. Polemic literature he had also studied—we rather fear, however, only on one side. But he

could relate "how King Harry had set up the Protestant religion—because the Pope of Room, (the Heavens be his bed!)—put his face totally agin the notion of letting the baste have more nor five wives at a turn"—He would add with a knowing wink—"that the one o' them was one too many." It was clear, according to Gregory's Church History, that "becase the bould King Henry the Aigth was a skhandle to Christian people, in regard o' the famale women, he gave to the sort o' clargy livin' in his time, ache a wife a-piece, and maybe sometimes more, according to his own fancy, just that they shouldn't be bringing himself over the coals for his own doin's." While pointing to the ruined monasteries of which we have elsewhere spoken, in the town under his residence, Gregory Roche could speak of the different orders of religious brethren who once inhabited them—(after having built them by the way), in their full glory; and he could expatiate on their former palmy state, compared with their present unheeded decay. Gregory's person was neat and spruce, arrayed in snuff-coloured broad-cloth, a wig of three buckles, a well-brushed three-cocked hat, and square-toed brogues. On all occasions, when the Mayor of Wind-gap sat recognised in full office, in his grand wicker chair, Gregory sat at his left hand. It is worth adding, that he was the collector of "the dues" of the Priest of his parish, as well as the Mayor's treasurer for whatever resulted from importunately assailing, in the persons of hundreds of ragged deputies, all passengers going and coming along the Wind-gap road, for contributions to the anniversaries of St. John's-eve, May-day, and so forth.

The man sitting upon his Worship's right hand was, as has been said, the most aged man in the parish. The oldest of his neighbours scarce remembered him with any other but a grey head; at present that head was white as snow, and his venerable hair fell in great profusion on his shoulders. Hence the people called him Shawn Leeach, that is Grey Jack, although he had been christened John Morrison.—His years were said to be one hundred and ten, yet his intellect was strong, and his memory unfaded. He took great pride in walking to Mass on Sundays, the wrist of one hand clasped by the fingers of the other, and both resting upon the small of his back, accompanied by a great-grandson and two of his children, and a great-granddaughter, of marriageable years. The image suggested to us by the appearance of this group has, we fear, often been used; yet we will venture to say, that to a poetic mind, our old friend and his companions might give the idea of blooming Spring, mature Summer, with its fruit, and hoary Winter, for once seen in company.

CHAPTER IV.

After having delivered the good humoured injunctions we have last reported of him, Maurteen Maher sat in state, his council at either hand. His upper house (we take the liberty so to denominate all the remaining old men of Wind-gap) collected around him; and his lower house, in the persons of the ancient dames of his realm, squatted on the ground before him. And, however wide may appear the distinctions between these humble assemblies and those of the estates of the nation, yet was there some degree of similarity. It is needless to observe that Maurteen Maher, such as we have sketched his character, may answer sufficiently well to shadow forth some royal personage. Compared with their contemporaries of the other sex, the old men were sententious, grave, imposing, and properly alive to the superiority of their nature, and should therefore be classed as the aristocracy of Wind-gap. As for the old women, they so far resembled "the people's house," that, whatever they lacked of the hereditary sapience, the dignified demeanour, and the natural station claimed by the lords of the creation, they made up for, by an infinite disproportion of incessant gabble.

All these good folk sat fully within the influence of the bonfire's blaze. While the boys and girls danced merrily away at some distance, the notes of the music which set them capering came pleasantly to the ears of the old people. It should be noticed that, contrary to the usage in higher quarters, king, lords, and commons, sat within speaking distance of each other; all mingling in general shannachus, except when two or three individuals chose to have a by-word. Nay, they quaffed their sheebeen in common; the same mug being sent from the throne to the lords, and even from the lords to the commons, whenever the ancient throats of the last-named assembly became thirsty from smoking their pipes, or their tongues parched from clacking.

"What *pisha-rogue** story takes the rounds among ye, *shanav† granvh?*" asked his Worship the Mayor, addressing, with condescending jocularity of tone, the seated matrons before him.—"By the wagging of them heads of yours, and the long faces you're

* Pisha-rogue, a tale of the supernatural.
† Shanav granvh, old women.

shaking at one another, I've a notion the discourse is runnin' on **Poochas*, or on some *Duowls'* tricks of a stormy night."

"Merry Easther to me, Mayor of Wind-gap," replied one of the dames, "but tisn't you I'd fancy to have for masther of my house. Oh, no—! Och, by no manes, *a roon!* Why, a poor woman couldn't blink her eye but you'd be at the bottom of the story."

"And if I was goin' to make an †*ownshuck* of myself, on that head, tisn't very clear to me I'd be troublesome to you, at all, Bridogue Mooney. I'd get a young colleen to comb my grey head, as the song says."—

"There is such combs as three-legged stools, to be found among the household furniture," smiled Gregory Roche.

"And the colleen that would take up wid you would be at her last senses, though ye *are* the mayor itself," retorted Bridogue. "And she'd often be axing why you hadn't the *misnoch* ‡ to thry your hand when you were worth the having. Though, to spake the honest truth, I believe that time is beyant your own recollection, asthore."

"Och, Bridge, that was'nt always your mind; do you lose the thought of ould times? But there's no use either in fretting or in telling on you; what's to happen will happen; and I say, with a hearty good will, much good may it do the man that made his own o' ye!—Ye're not sayin' amin to me, Ned Mooney?—he suddenly asked of Bridogue's mate, who sat near him. Ned expressively and waggishly shook his old pate, turned up his eyes, took the *dudeen* § from between his teeth and answered, "Och! she was a blessed bargain to me, praise be to God!"—Having said which, he replaced his *dudeen*, tightened his teeth and squeezed his lips on it.

"But what would ye all do, only that I'm a bachelor boy," continued the Mayor, "and have no wife, like a mill-stone round my neck, to keep me from minding your concarns? Isn't it well for ye that I happen to hould the same belief wid the crature in the cart, as ye all know. 'Tis in the ballad."—And the Mayor sang forth:—

"There was a victim in a cart
A goin' to be hanged;
When his reprieve came from the King
The cart and crowd did stand:
But he must either take a wife
Or be content to die.

* Fairies. † Fool. ‡ Luck. § Short pipe.

'Och! why, then, should I keep my life?'
The victim did reply:
'There's people here from every place,
Why should I spile their sport?
The bargain's hard in either case—
But come! drive on the cart.'"

To this not very elegant version of a not very original witticism, there was the contribution of what the author of "The Man of Refinement" considers a vulgar evidence of the feelings of human nature,—a laugh. Accompanied by what is deemed not out of the way, in the boxes of the Italian Opera, namely, clapping of hands.

"Bridogue," resumed the Mayor, "ye know ye were a comely crature, in the time we spake of, and used to dance, "cover the buckle," so as to take the light out of my eyes. And ye know, more betoken, that it's not my own fault that I'm a lone man, but because Ned Mooney was a cleaner boy. Howsomever, as I said afore, or something like it, a pottle of frettin' doesn't sell for a groat."

Ned Mooney puffed forth a volume of smoke, which he had been inhaling during the Mayor's last speech, and half laughed and half whispered, into his sovereign's ear, "Mostha! bud ye were born with a silver spoon in ye're mouth to be quit of her!"

"Well, Bridogue," the Mayor went on, "tell us what ye were colloguing about. For our own discourse here is reeled off to the bare spindle."

"When ye said we wre tellin' of Duowl's doin's, Mayor of Wind-gap," answered Bridogue, "the guess ye made was almost the right one. We war talkin' about The Strange Man o' the Inch," she added in a low confidential and now serious voice, to which all who heard her, except Maurteen, responded with looks of almost frightened attention.

"And if I didn't care much what I was sayin', I'd lay a wager you were givin' him a nice purty character?" smiled the Mayor, with seeming indifference.

"Och! in honest truth, a good name is a bright jewel," remarked Bridogue, unconsciously half quoting Shakespear, "and t'would be the sore pity to cock it up in the cap of the strange man o' the Inch. And for the best o' rasons in the world, because he never cared for it, his own self."

"And what's ye're own notion about him, a-vanithee?"

"Sence ye have the likin' to hear to it, I'll rehearse it for you,

what our notion is. We were a sayin' that, if ever there was a cloven-hoofed Duowl, that pawned himself on people for a dacent-looking man—(though he *has* a little halt in his gait, too,)—and sich things happen oftentimes, they say—the sthrange man o' the Inch is just that sort of a body."

"'Twas well I did'nt pass my word for your civility to him, Bridogue."

"Och, ay; but we were sayin' no more nor what his doin's give the warrant for; and there's more nor that. I'll make my words good agin him, or I'll give you lave and license to say I hav'nt such a thing at all as a tongue behind my teeth."

"Whatever way the story turns up, the Mayor won't say that o' ye, any how," remarked the experienced Ned Mooney. "For if he took his oath of it on the Mass-book, there's another one livin' in Wind-gap could tell him what would give him his doubts, for all that."

"My speech is to pleasure the Mayor, Ned Mooney."

"Faith, and sure I don't begrudge it to him. There will be enough for us all and to spare." Ned Mooney was a laughing philosopher, and jested with his misfortunes.

"Well, Bridogue," resumed the Mayor, "we are longin' to know the rason why ye put hoofs on the strange man o' the Inch?"

Bridogue pulled down, with a sudden jerk, her petticoats over her shins, and tucked all her clothes under her. She shifted her position till she was poised to her satisfaction; stretched her hands towards the blaze and rubbed them well together; smacked her lips, and protruded her chin towards the Mayor. Amongst her sister dames, similar movements were made to fix themselves comfortably and lastingly in their sitting positions. Most of the old men rested their chins upon their sticks, and bent themselves towards her, half smiling, yet staring inquisitively. The pipes of males and females were hastily replenished and vigorously relighted, as if to lay in sea-storage for a long and important voyage of gossip. Then Bridogue went on with her shannachus.

"Isn't it a thing known to every one hearkinin' to me, that ever sence the doin's that happened there, down at the Inch, now more nor twenty years a gone, no crature, that was a livin' Christhen at all, would go to live in that owld house.—Becase the sperrit o' the lady that died in it, and the sperrit o' the young man, through whose manes the life left her, goes thrampaging through the rooms, by night, screeching and sthruggling most frightful for to hear. Isn't that thrue for me, I'd be glad to larn?"

This question, though put generally, was, after a pause, replied to only by Gregory Roche. "I b'lieve," he said," there's no one you might ask about that house could tell ye more of it nor our Mayor his own self."

"To be sure, I could say something of it," observed the Mayor, with a half-laughing kind of expression. "But I'll keep my knowledge to myself, Gregory Roche. In the main time, for the rason that you are not tongue-tied, ye can tell the neighbours what happened to us both, the night we went to the Inch."

"I often tould all that came to my knowing about that night; so that 'twould be no story to any one," answered Gregory. This was literally true; there were none present who had not heard of the visit paid by the Mayor and his younger council to the abominated house of the Inch. Yet such is the love of the marvellous, among people who purposely set themselves down to listen to a recital of it, that every voice cried out either that the circumstance had not been fully related, or that it had been quite forgotten: and an *encore* was loudly called for. A public singer could not have been more obliged than was Gregory Roche for the request made of him.

"Well, neighbours, well; 'twouldn't be a mannerly turn to say the No to ye, and so spile the discourse, when we are all sociable together of a St. John's-eve. There's never a one here that's not ould enough to bring to mind when the house at the Inch was shut up, and the rason why its dours and windows were all boulted and barred."

"Och! and sure we do remember it well," interrupted Bridogue Mooney, snatching the narrative from Gregory's mouth, with as much eagerness as a starving dog might seize a bone from the jaws of another. "Myself has the whole story on the tip o' my tongue."

"Then tell it, Bridogue, in St. John's name," said the Mayor. "You'll sleep the asier for it, and poor Ned will pass the night quieter. Besides, you're so handy at the speech, Bridogue, that ye'll be at the end of your journey before Gregory could get to the first turnpike."

Bridogue gave her person a pert move, while Gregory smiled. But at the bottom of his appearance of complaisance, there was a sediment. The *raconteuse* started on her narrative, with an avidity that fully bore out the Mayor's assertion of her professional capacity. Taking the liberty to recur to our elegant simile of the rifled bone, her haste was doubled, at once to satisfy her own appetite, and prevent the possibility of a reprisal. Yet, first-rate as was

esteemed Bridogue's gossipping talent, she committed, to our taste, so many digressions from the main point—such a scaling of the genealogical tree of every creature mentioned in her *Shannachus*—that we will endeavour to condense her matter, according to our own notions of the requisite compactness of story-telling.

The garrulous old body had fixed the period of her tale at twenty-one years, or thereabouts, previous to the time of its relation. At that epoch it was known to "all the world, (the world of Windgap we presume she meant,) that ould Harry Stokesbury," the proprietor of the house at the Inch, and of considerable property beside, "had been as wicked a sinner in his time as ever broke the commandments." That is, he had led a self-indulging, irregular life. It was equally well known that, like all *roués*, he had been an unreasoning tyrant to his family. And that when, from the inroads made on his constitution by excesses, as well as by years, he became no longer able to pursue his former courses, he continued just as intolerant at home, as if he had been a voluntary ascetic.

To his only son, the "young Harry Stokesbury," now a man in the prime of youthful vigour, and who shewed every propensity to follow the example given him by his sire, he was, with a most ungenerous want of sympathy, particularly severe and oppressive; fuming, and cursing, and raving at his imitator's follies and crimes. But the younger Harry, laughing at the idea that his father, the most thorough-going rake of his own day, should turn moralist upon him, merely in spite that his descendant could eclipse him, took little heed of the parental lectures thus lavished upon him. In fact, it was visible to every one that Henry the Second had resolved to prove himself "a chip of the old block," whatever the old block itself might choose to think about the matter. But the "ould fellow" began to keep a firmer gripe of his money than he had hitherto done. "Like the dog in the manger," thought his son, "he can't use it himself, and won't give it to those who can." Young Stokesbury soon wanted, in fact, the means of pursuing what he called his pleasures. In consequence of unsatisfactory payments, people began to refuse him new credit, and to become troublesome to him about old scores. He sent them all to his Father (after first sending them all to the Devil,—"and there's little in the difference," remarked young Harry to himself.) "Ould Harry" ordered them, however, to be chased off his premises. Some, who insisted strongly on their claims, were compelled, in consequence, to fight their way to the high-road, through two or three house-dogs, and four or five servants,—glad to escape without very material personal injury.

"The young fellow" inherited his father's passionate temper, as well as his taste for pleasant pursuits. It was well known, indeed, that, in the first-mentioned instance, he even excelled his prototype; his torrent-like nature becoming quite turbulent and destructive when attempted to be curbed in its career. He demanded money from "the ould fellow," but not only got none, but was met with showers of oaths and vituperation. "The young fellow" recriminated as he knew how. At the scenes of altercation which took place between them, and at the sound of their maniac voices, rising high in mutual and unbridled passion, every soul under the same roof with them shuddered.

"Well," (and here the reader must imagine Bridogue piquantly smacking her lips,) "the young fellow" seized whatever he could lay hands upon, either in the shape of money, or of articles convertible into money, and rioted away as long as the supplies, so gained, lasted. But long they did not last. He was again in necessity; and another fearful contention took place between him and his unhappy parent. And another; and many others. (Bridogue's manner of relating these facts was solemn.) Until at their last interview, the Father struck the Son, and the Son raised his sinewy arm, and felled his Father to his foot. And from that day, until he got an unchristian grave under the waters of the sea, a curse fell upon and followed young Harry Stokesbury. Nor did the listeners of Wind-gap see any thing extraordinary in this fact; for, to their primitive hearts, it seemed an immeasurable sin, that, even with provocation, the child should commit outrage on the person of the father.

It was reported at the time, as Bridogue asserted, that "the young fellow," after having fled the house, to escape death at the hands of his father, who, in his rage, armed himself with a weapon to inflict it, became very sorry for his abominable act; and, when he had cooled, was penitent, and did all in his power to make peace at home. But, "the ould fellow" would never set his eyes upon him; and at his dying hour left him nothing but his curse.

Still, according to our narrator, and indeed, the general credence of the country, the young man was as much to be pitied as blamed. To be sure, no one could help calling him wild, and wayward, and passionate. Nor was it any great wonder that he felt inclined to tread in the paths that had been well beaten for him by his father. Yet, many good Christians said that he was affectionate and generous. And Bridogue insisted that to those below him, who wanted and claimed his assistance, he had shewn a liberality so extreme,

that it almost atoned, in the world's eye, for his youthful indiscretions. She particularly instanced the following case:

While yet a boy, he had discovered a near relation of his deceased mother in the most abject distress. This person he instantly snatched from penury, called him his brother, and, at his intercession, the elder Stokesbury consented to receive the new comer as an inmate of his family. The lad was educated along with young Harry; was clothed as well; sported with him. In fact, was treated in every respect as a brother, indeed.

The characters, and even the appearance and manners of the two youths were very dissimilar. Young Harry was a strong-featured, yet handsome boy, with superabundant spirit; his poor cousin, so cherished, was as handsome, but mild looking, and with the expression of even a want of spirit upon his countenance. Yet, Harry seemed to love him better because of this contrast; it made him more positively the protector and patron of his timid relative.

"But smooth water runs deep, and the Duowl lies at the bottom of it," was Bridogue's sage commentary on this soft seeming individual. Young Henry Stokesbury soon experienced cause to repent that he had ever rescued the lad from starvation. Old Stokesbury had under his roof, a ward, an interesting young girl. Her dower when she arrived at a disposeable age, was to be a large one, and her father had willed that she should espouse her guardian's son, on the promise that the guardian consented to the match. It was said that the young man loved most enthusiastically his betrothed bride. No wonder that he should; for she was generally allowed to be beautiful; and, like the lamb, even too mild and gentle. The very opposite, indeed, as was his cousin, to her intended husband.

Shortly after the deadly feud with his father, young Harry left his native place, and went, no one knew whither. Three months after, his detesting parent died. It was generally supposed that, notwithstanding his father's will, and even curse, the disinherited heir would immediately return home to survey his chances of fortune. But twelve months elapsed before Harry's re-appearance at the house of Inch. Then his visit was known by its consequences.

During his absence, it had become whispered about that the person whom, from early boyhood, he had cherished, had behaved most foully and treacherously to him. That he had inherited young Harry's paternal property; and that, for the accomplishment of his views, he had kept up the father's rage against the son. That, therefore, the old man's curse had been his only legacy to his only child. Worse than all this; rumour now told that the traitor was, at

Harry's return, the husband of the beautiful and wealthy ward of Old Stokesbury.

As evidence to a jury, perhaps there might have been nothing certainly proven on these points. But appearances bore out suspicions. The usurper lived in the Inch-House, and the fair young girl lived there with him. The closest observers could only conclude that they were man and wife.

Upon a dark night, the house was attacked by a band of armed men, broken into, and at once given up to pillage. Harry Stokesbury's treacherous cousin fell, covered with wounds, inflicted by Harry's own avenging hand, near to the bed, on which lay his faithless mistress—a shrieking witness of this, perhaps, rightful retribution. The general story went, that she had become a mother only a few days before, and that, when the terrible young Harry, after his sanguinary deed, turned to her to reproach her with her infidelity, he found that with her last, long scream, her young spirit had passed away.

While yet grimly standing over the bleeding and senseless victim of his revenge, he was seized upon and conveyed to prison. The authorities of the neighbouring town had received private intimation of the intended attack on the house at the Inch. And, although they had been too officially precautious, or perhaps lazy, to anticipate it, they at last sent overpowering numbers, to ensure to the law vengeance upon the law's aggressors.

Harry Stokesbury, arrested on the very scene of his crime, was tried at the bar of justice, and condemned to death. Yet, tremendous as had been the result of his rage, the provocations to it, according to general report, were mercifully taken into account, and eventually, he was only transported from his country;—transported from it, as soon appeared, never to reach the shores of another. Authentic intelligence reached Ireland that the vessel in which he sailed, had foundered in open sea, and that all on board had perished.

Although, as the savage youth stood over the stiffening body of his relation, he had thought him dead, his victim lived on. After twenty years and upwards, he still continued to be a breathing man, upon the very evening of Bridogue's narrative; "lading, to be sure," added Bridogue, "a very quiet life, in the town at our feet—But who can forget, for all that, his airly villany?"

CHAPTER V.

THE house at the Inch, thus marked by the assertions of Bridogue, and the assent of her neighbours, who, by the way, were the nearest populous community to it, as the scene of a hideous tragedy, had indeed been shut up and unoccupied for many years. Within the last three months only it had been taken by the object of the old woman's present animadversions. Bridogue closed her story with this remark:—

"An' it's a thruth, afore ye all, that no right body would ever venture to go live in such a place, where the sperrits of Harry Stokesbury and the young woman, that died there, haunt the place the whole night long. An' if 'twas a thing," she added, "that the house at the Inch had never been a place of ill luck, or *Meeroch*, both the one and the other, were in it now. For it covers the head of the wickedest man the world ever gave birth to; not barrin' ould Harry Stokesbury, or even young Harry himself."

We have before surmised that all the assembled sages of Windgap, male and female, were well acquainted, previous to this night, with the story of Harry Stokesbury. But Bridogue was peculiarly remarkable for her powers of newly arranging and combining the incidents of a tale, no matter how often she repeated it. So that, even prolix as she had proved in the present instance, none of her auditors seemed fatigued. On the contrary, throughout her narrative, and most emphatically at its conclusion, the old dame was greeted with various exclamations of wonder, pleasure, and applause. All which testimonies of her talents she accepted as matters of course.

One only of her auditors wore a face of indifference, on the occasion, and even ostentatiously displayed it. This was Ned Mooney, the good dame's spouse, who quietly contented himself with ejaculating, "Thanks be to the blessed St. John, she has done!" It need not be observed, that this circumstance went most bitterly to Bridogue's heart. Want of interest in any one is certainly the keenest offence the story-teller can receive: what must it be, when it comes from one's own husband?

Different remarks circulated among the old people, upon the matter under discussion. Until at length it was recollected that Gregory Roche had been interrupted in his modest attempt, to relate an anecdote, connected with the house at the Inch. He was now requested, by all, to resume. It was not, however, an easy

matter to prevail on the weaver of Wind-gap to take up the snapped threads of his intellectual loom: another artist had been publicly preferred to himself. But the Mayor knew the weak point of the man, and whispered him, that what had occurred, was only according to "good manners;" that, merely through gallantry, women must have their way, all the world over; that he was assured, Gregory Roche, whom everybody regarded, as the "patthern of Wind-gap, in regard of mannerly conduct," would not, for the first time in his life, be forgetful of "dacent behaver." Gregory was conciliated. When all were again fixed in attitudes of attention, the "patthern of Wind-gap" began his anecdote.

"All that the plasing vanithee, Misthress Mooney by name, tould to ye, neighbours, was a thrue story, and well reharsed over. Everbody said, after the house at the Inch was shet up, that sthrange cries used to be hard there in the night time, and sthrange lights seen in the upper windies. Misthress Mooney related for you that 'tis more nor twenty years sence the young woman died there. By coorse of nature, the Mayor of Wind-gap and myself were younger people that day than we are now at the present time, forenent ye. We had no Mayor at all over us then, more be token. Maurteen Maher was only Maurteen Maher, in them days. Well; Maurteen brought me down by the river side a-fishing, of a very fine evening, that would tempt any one to take a slope to himself by the green bank, where the flowers were blooming to the eyesight. Ye all know, neighbours, that the house at the Inch is near to the wather's side. We were a coming our way home. Now and then we stopped in our discoorse, and turned our looks to the house, for we bethought ourselves of the story that was going. It was a good two hours after the night-fall.

"Says Maurteen Maher, to me, (remember he was only Maurteen Maher at that time, neighbours, or I'd call him the Mayor, to be mannerly)—'Gregory,' says he to me, 'as sure as the fishing-rod is in my hand, I see light in the top windy of the place'—Neighbours all, I looked myself, and light there was. We held our tongues for a while, like people sthruck with amaze. Till at last, says Maurteen to me agin, 'Gregory, I'll see what's in the house, if 'twas the Duowl runnin' with his lantern through it. Will you come with me?'"

"'No, Maurteen, no,' I made answer to him. 'The heavens be our safeguard, we shouldn't meddle or make with things of that sort.'

"'Come near to the house, Gregory Roche,' Maurteen said to me. Myself demurred, good neighbours; myself demurred to Maur-

teen Maher. But he took me by the arm, and by main force brought me with him; for he was a sthronger boy nor I was.

"We got very near to the house. The light of the windies blazed brighter. And we hard, aye, as positive sure as I'm a livin' sowl, this St. John's-eve, and as sure as the saint's good fire is burnin' before me, and as sure as ye are all hearkenin' to me, we hard a pitiful, doleful screech, that stopt us as if we were shot. 'Twas like the screech of a woman in her sorest throuble. Neighbours, neighbours, it was;—only more dolefuller, by far, by far."

Gregory Roche here paused. It was not without intention that, with due solemnity of voice, shaking of his head, and impressive mysteriousness of visage, he had managed to bring his story to a certain pitch of interest. To measure the success of his art, therefore, Gregory paused. Anon he grew pleased with his observations; the usual marks of deep sympathy with the narrator were fully displayed. Towards Maurteen Maher indeed, Gregory, did not venture to direct his eye. As he had sometimes experienced before, he feared to find on the Mayor's lip a half waggish smile. Nor would he have been at present disappointed in his apprehensions; though perhaps his Worship was only amused with his counsel's rhetorical decorations.

"Neighbours, neighbours," resumed Gregory, not yet quite satisfied with the strong impression he had made. "Maurteen Maher that was, and the Mayor that is, will bear me out in what I say; it was indeed, it was a very mournful screech we heard."

"You're tellin' the story mighty well, Gregory Roche," said the Mayor. "'Twas plain to know that a livin' Christhin couldn't bawl out that way, through his teeth, if they made a King of England of him."

"No, neighbours, no! Not a livin' Christhin sowl would screech that a way.

"'Come into the house, Gregory Roche,' says Maurteen Maher, to myself, very wickedly.

"'Into the house is it, Maurteen Maher?'—I made answer to him. And I shook my finger at him, the way I now shake it, neighbours. I did—I shook my finger at him.

"'No, Maurteen Maher,' says I, 'I will not darken the door-stone of that house. 'Tis no place for honest, livin' people,' says I to him.

"'I'll go myself, then,' says Maurteen Maher, pushing me away from him. Didn't you push me from you, Mayor of Wind-gap, that was Maurteen Maher then? didn't you?"

"I did in good troth," answered his Worship, smiling quietly.

"'Take my advice,' says I to him, and I shook my finger at him again; 'take my counsel and don't enter there; lave the dead to their doom; to their doom,' says I. 'I will go in,' says Maurteen Maher over again. Neighbours, I was the image of one thunder-struck, by rason of his bouldness. There was no fear upon him. 'Here is the fish and the fishing-rod,' says he, to myself—'it would be a pity to have them good throuts lost.' Aye indeed, neighbours, all he seemed to think about was the losin' of the throuts. 'If they brake my bones, and that I can't come back to you,' says Maurteen, 'If I *don't* come back to you, in an hour's time, go home, Gregory Roche; go your ways home, and send the throuts to Mr. Helsham at the Gazebo. I promised them to him, and, dead or alive, I'll keep my word. Send them to him, Gregory Roche; and make sale of this fishing-rod, and of every thing you'll find in my house, and give the money to the poor, for the good o' my sowl.'

"I was amazed beyant the world, neighbours. I was like unto a body turned into a pillar of salt, after a manner. And while I was in this sort o' way, Maurteen Maher left me. He staid away near to an hour; and he came back with a sarious face, I'll pledge myself to ye. But what he seen he never tould of."

"Would ye have my face turned round to my back, Gregory, or would ye have me be withered into a sthagown * for letting my tongue run away with my brains?"

Gregory Roche was fully satisfied at perceiving that his contribution to the wonders of the night was well received,—quite as well, indeed, as the more lengthened one of Bridogue Mooney. Therefore it did not come into his head to reply to the Mayor's last observation. Many comments and surmises followed, which we will pass over, only noticing the more material topics.

"It was a thrue remark for Bridogue Mooney to make," said a woman with a palsied head, every shake of which threw a very effective hiatus into her speech. "'Tis mighty thrue for Bridogue Mooney to say that no right body would go to live in such a house as the house at the Inch."

"Right body, inagh!" cried Bridogue, smartly. "*He's* no right body, as sure as I'm an ould sinner, he is not. I'm tould he's mighty ill-favoured to look on, and elderly into the bargain. And if he hadn't witchcraft on his side, is it to be believed, that an ould ugly offender of a man 'ud be able to overpersuade so many young cratures?"

* Sthagown, a frost-bitten potato.

"I believe, beyant any doubt," observed one of the old men of the company, "that such sin and shkandle was never known to happen in a neighbourhood as fell upon the counthry round the Inch-House, since the sthrange man came to live there."

"There was never the like known in the world wide," answered Bridogue. "If he was a sightly young blade, that 'ud be plasing to the eye, and carried a coaxin' smile upon the lips, and had a sugary tongue in his head, there wouldn't be half the surprise. But, take my word over again for it, it's by witchcraft, and witchcraft alone, he comes round them. Isn't Nelly Darcy, the smith's daughter, ashamed to shew her head? Isn't there Doran's crature of a colleen, not over sixteen years ould, turned from the door by her own father and mother? And isn't there Mahony's wife, that wint by the name of purty Peggy, afore Tim Mahony brought her home—(Tim Mahony, ye know, keeps the sign of the 'Hurlers' at the cross-roads, beyant the Inch-House)—wasn't she sent to her father, by rason of her husband's displeasure? Ochone! ochone!" continued Bridogue, pathetically, "the shkandle is brought on us all, on account of the unsightly ould man o' the Inch! I'll tell ye, onst for all, he gives draughts to us some way or other."

"You didn't drink of his draught, Bridogue?" the Mayor facetiously inquired.

"The ould sinner! I'd throw the vessel and the liquor into his sinful eyes," Bridogue answered, with virtuous indignation.

"There's sich things done of a certain," said ould Daddy Leeach. "Every body can spake of what the *shoolin' Bacchos** brings upon young cratures, by manes of bewitched pins, and heribs, and dhrinks, sweet and plasing to the mouth, though bitter for the heart, and bad for the poor sowl. I knew in my time, sthrange things to be used for the makin' of the love draughts. They say that the young ones of them *foulhogues*† that flies through the air from the morning till the night, taken from the nest afore their feathers grows, and the nest they're found in taken at the same time—they say that if the bird, and nest, and all is biled up together for the wicked purpose, the broth it makes will force a girl to run after a boy, or a boy to run after a girl, for the mere love, the world over."

"Is it the swallows ye made mention of, Shawn Leeach?" asked another very old man near him.

"Aye, in good thruth," Meehawl. 'Twas about them swallows, the youngest of 'em, I mane, that I made mention."

* Wandering beggars. † Swallows.

"And faiks," resumed Meehawl, "the rason I put the question to ye, on that head, is this. Very airly of a hazy morning, I was passin' by the house at the Inch—the Lord stand between us and all harm!"—here the narrator piously crossed himself: "when what should I see, lookin' towards the house, but the sthrange man himself, standin' outside of a windy. And he was pullin' down a swallow's nest."

"An' ye seen him doin' that, Meehawl? Then, it's likely enough that Bridogue Mooney is right in her sayin'."

"I'll stand up for my sayin'," replied Bridogue Mooney. "He puts the charms on us, howsomever he finds manes to do it."

"I'll tell ye what I hard of them swallows, neighbours," said Daddy Leeach. "Them swallows and them birds, too, that goes by the name o' willy wagtails, I'm tould for sartin, has three drops o' the Devil's blood in them, Lord be good to us."

"'Tis often and often, I took notice of both kinds of them birds, the *foulhogues* and the *spiddogue coppel*. The spiddogue coppel is never known to sing his verse of a song, only when the day is bitther could, and dripping wet. Then it's a mournful thing to hear him, and look at him, standin' on a could wet stone, by the road side, or by the river side, liltin' his bit of a *croonawn*, an' lookin' about him so 'cute, and waggin' his long tail, for all the world as if he gloried in the dark rainy-day, that puts a cloud over the mind of all Christhin cratures. And them swallows, agin. They skim about, from the risin' to the settin' of the sun, and they never put foot to the ground like our own birds: but, when the storm is comin' to vex the earth, they all get in a row together, upon an ould wall, or on the top of a body's house, and they sing, and they sing, all of them in a chorus like, as loud as ever they can, makin' merry at the doleful change, that's comin' on, and that they *know* is comin' on, more betoken, better nor the people themselves. Moreover, there's not one among us can tell how they come here to Wind-gap, or where they come from, or where in the world they go to in the winter-time. I often hard it said, as well as our neighbour, Shawn Leeach, that the three dhrops o' the Devil's blood is in them, and in the willy wagtails."

These comments on the recipe for the manufacture of love-powders; the undeniable fact that the strange man at the Inch had been seen in the act of pulling down swallows' nests; his morose and yet popular character (in a certain way); his want of personal recommendation, and yet his personal success; all this put together, left our lords and commons of Wind-gap in little doubt as to the means by

which his unaccountable triumphs had been won. Nor, indeed, must we much wonder at the conclusion to which our good folks arrived. For, according to their primitive ideas, nothing but witchcraft could account for the Turk-like sway of their abhorred neighbour. The want of good conduct in any one of the young girls of their community being looked upon as a kind of mysterious visitation.

It was, however, mentioned that, sometimes when by chance his charms ceased to influence, the strange man of the Inch did not stop short of secondary, human means. A tale of violence was added, according to which the precincts of the garden of the Inch-House was looked upon as banned and unholy ground, although the offender had been disguised beyond the possibility of recognition. On all hands, it was admitted that the strange man o' the Inch had "a sort o' look," a baneful, baleful look, which, if it once rested on a comely girl of any rank, ensured her eventual perdition, or was to be averted only by a miracle. In fact, Bridogue Mooney clearly made out her proposition, which had opened the conference round the bonfire, namely, that, "the sthrange man 'o the Inch was a cloven hoofed Duowl, passin' himself for a dacent elderly man."

We extract from bye conversations of our good friends of Windgap, some assertions that did not tend to set up the character of the subject of their *shannachus.* It was vouched that the only person known to live with him was a wrinkled haggard woman: yet many figures were seen after twilight going to the house and coming from it. And at hours of the night, when well conducted people ought to be at rest, uproarious rioting was known to continue under his roof till day-break. "Boys of the neighbourhood" had once been venturous enough, during one of these commotions, to approach the premises. It was very dark, and they were moving stealthily onward, when suddenly they heard a fearful, hellish shout; the lights, they had previously seen so vivid within the house, became extinguished. Before they had time to advance or recede, each in his consternation was seized, as all averred, by a "horned Divil," for the group was young and strong, and could not otherwise have been so overcome. And, thus mastered, they were urged supernaturally along, "in sich a hurry, that they hadn't time to bless themselves." Until they arrived at the river's bank, which as has been mentioned, flowed near the house; and into the river they were plunged, and out of the river they barely escaped, although good swimmers, with the wise resolution never again to oppose earthly prowess to fiendish agency.

"Be him a sinful Christin, bought and sould, or be him a Duowl in earnest, may the Heavens keep him from our road!" ejaculated Bridogue Mooney.

"Amin, and amin over agin, gossip," assented the dame, with the pendulating head. "From evil doin's, and evil doers, the Lord deliver us!"

A rather violent stir here took place, among the dancers at a little distance; and six or eight stout young fellows, heralded by the man of straw, and his herculean helpmate, dragged towards the Mayor's chair two individuals wearing large mantles, and broad-brimmed hats. As the parties confronted the judgment seat, hat and cloak were torn from the person of the foremost culprit. Almost in the middle of the gossip, which had occupied itself about him, "the sthrange man o' the Inch" stood fully in view. His *nom de guerre* was shouted by more than one voice: immediately those who had held him loosed their grasp, and he stood in the blaze of the fire, laughing loudly at the ludicrous confusion which his presence created.

Among the old women, there ensued a hideous discord of screams. They tumbled over each other, in their hasty, though not successful, attempt to avoid the neighbourhood of one whom they themselves had magnified into a very formidable being: in a few seconds, those amongst them who could run, ran with all their might; and those who could only hobble, hobbled with all their energy; Bridogue Mooney leading the cohort, with the loudest screams offended virtue could put forth, while at each inch of their way over Wind-gap hill, every echo of his devilish laugh added impetus to the hearts and heels of the scandalized fugitives.

The strange man of the Inch, now that he could be really looked upon, seemed to be about forty-five; though he might be less, for his face, that is, as much of it as was fully visible, had become disfigured by ugly gashes, which probably added to it an appearance of age. Over half of his features he wore a black handkerchief. Of the one eye left exposed, scarce any thing worse than power and brilliancy of expression could be conjectured. An air of lofty command ran through his bearing. He was clad in a full skirted coat of blue cloth, richly laced; a vest of embroidered silk, a small-clothes of blue plush, and silk stockings, and square-toed shoes, with silver buckles in them.

After the retreat of the old women, his mocking laughter suddenly gave way to a bold imperious manner. His single observable

eye flashed fiercely, and his brow knit deeply above it, as he looked on every side at the gaping crowd.

"Come, make way here, fellows," he said. "I have a strong inclination to punish a score or two of you, for your rough handling, now that you have dared to rob me of my cloak and hat. Make way, I say, or I will score some ugly marks on your foolish faces;" and he tapped the short crooked sword at his side.

All the old men around Maurteen, and all the young people who had followed from the dancing ground, were receding to make way accordingly, when Maurteen Maher clutched his osier-wand, and, sitting very upright in his chair, cried out in a sonorous voice—

"Stop! stop awhile, genteel, and give an account of yourself."

The strange man of the Inch turned suddenly round, and glared at the questioner.

"Yes," resumed Maurteen, "I'd have a word or two wid ye, afore ye lave our place."

The summoned person was evidently much surprised and offended at this interruption. He walked rapidly over to his worship, fixed a stern look upon him, was silent for an instant, and at last, burst forth in a question:

"Who the devil are *you*, that stop *me*?"

Maurteen Maher did not wince before the strange man of the Inch. He held his head loftily, and his tone was bold without being arrogant, as he answered,

"*I* am the Mayor of Wind-gap, far above the Mayor of the town below us. As you may larn by lookin' on the hoight of this place, and how low the town lies at our feet."

"Take your foolish mummery to some other market, you old, ridiculous fool!" cried the strange man of the Inch, again vehemently turning to go away.

"There's no mummery about me," said Maurteen. "I govern the people here by their own free will and consent. And I govern them for their good."

"You're an old grey-headed idiot, I take it. You look d—d impertinently at me, and I've half a mind to change your tone," continued the "sthrange man."

"Tisn't by fighting with the swoord, I should be able to rule over my neighbours. But for all that, I'm not afeard o' ye, as wicked as they say ye are, and as fierce as your one eye burns upon me. So you need not lay your hand upon your crooked hanger: the odds o' the battle 'ud be agin' ye. But I don't want any thing

but pace and quiet. Listen to me. I'm tould ye said evil words into the ear of a young girl at the dance, and put your arms round her, when she didn't want them. For that offence on Wind-gap, you are brought before me, the Mayor. It is time for you to give over foolish and sinful notions and behaver. The snow of age has not fallen on your locks as thick as it has upon mine; but still I'd have you be thinkin' o' your grave. 'Tis a shkandle to us on Wind-gap to see a middle-aged man runnin' the race o' the wicked. I say to you, repent o' your sins, and larn to be a Christhin."

This magnificent address, though full of never-to-be-forgotten morality, to the ears of Maurteen's neighbours, seemed to strike the "sthrange man" as something eminently ridiculous. He burst into a renewal of his former fit of laughter, and hurried, now unobstructed, from the presence of his lecturer.

The chief offender's companion had stood apart during the scene we have described; he moved in silence after his principal.

The Mayor advanced suddenly towards him, seized his cloak, plucked it open, and glanced into his face. It was but a momentary view he could have gained of the person's features, who recoiled, and drew his disguise closer round him. But there were others besides the Mayor who imagined they had recognised the second domino, as will soon be seen.

"I had a notion who was hid under that cloak," said the Mayor, softly to this individual:—

"I promised to stand your friend, and 'twas plain to me, and now 'tis plainer than ever, that a friend you will want to give you help when you are not thinkin' you need it. Poor boy! I hard it long ago, and I b'lieve at present that there is a doom upon you, and that ye must work your way through it. Go, then, in Heaven's name, and face it. I'll keep my word to you all the same. The Mayor of Wind-gap *will* be your friend."

The person he addressed hastened away in the path of the strange man of the Inch, as if glad, like him, to be freed of Maurteen's sermons.

It was some time before the sensation, created by this commotion at the bonfire, became appeased. Little bare-legged scouts were sent out after the old women, who slowly returned, upon the strongest assurances, on the part of the Mayor, of their personal safety. Terror may be an impulse, particularly acting upon the delicate constitution of the nervous female system; but above even terror, is to be ranked the nervous curiosity of the sex. So that, according to these two rules, the old sisterohod of Wind-gap

may be permitted, after the allaying of their mortal fright, to re-assemble once more round the bonfire and its Sovereign. Nay, they even squatted down again on the very spot they had lately abandoned, brim-full, every one of them, of most fruitful subjects of conversation. Above all other things, the Mayor's bold and magisterial bearing drew forth their unlimited eulogy; we suspect that Maurteen had intended it should have produced such an effect. At all events, he felt his character to be considerably elevated this night, in the eyes of his subjects.

His worship continued calmly to preside over the renewed gossip, and answered in good-humoured loftiness to the adulation showered upon him. We believe that the old women of Wind-gap could have remained for a week sitting on their heels, so highly did they relish the music of each other's tongues, had not the Mayor reminded them that the hour for the display of their activity was come. At which intimation, the aged belles and the grey-headed beaux of his jurisdiction joined hands, and, forming a circle, set to dancing with all their possible agility, round and round the glimmering remnants of the bonfire; those who could boast the greatest strength of limb supported others whose sinews refused to bend with sufficient flexibility, and whose joints had become rusty in their sockets. In this career of crippled movements; in the grey locks set floating by their motion; and in the wrinkled visages of the performers, there was a semblance more to a crowd of witches and wizards, such as Tam O'Shanter had seen while wending homeward on his mare Meg, than to that of earthly people, engaged in an earthly pastime. While the Mayor, with his white wand presiding over the rite, was no unfit representative of the requisite enchanter, and the grotesque figures of Meehawl O'Moore, and of his gigantic mate, might be interpreted into two very ungainly imps, attending upon him.

When the red embers had been nine times encircled by the new dancers, each crone secured a portion of them, and took it carefully home, as a security against charms for the ensuing year. We may safely close this chapter with the assertion, that they all wended towards their beds heavily laden with the shannachus and occurrences of this "prasent blessed St. John's-eve."

After the close of every festivity, it was the custom of the Mayor of Wind-gap to patrol with his bailiff his circuit of authority. Accordingly upon this night, when it was time for all to be a-bed and quiet, he renewed his customary precautions, and went to his

own pillow assured that all his people were "safe and sound," and, against all chances, certain of continuing so till the morning. But, for once in his life at least, the Mayor of Wind-gap was wrong.

CHAPTER VI.

THERE may be some long-lived persons yet in existence, bred and born even out of the salubrious air of Wind-gap, who remember Roger Divey. He was best known in his day by the title of "yallow Roger,"—a surname derivable from the sooty-saffron hue of as much of his real surface as could be seen—namely, his large, lank, parchment-covered countenance, and his hands. He was a tall, gaunt man. His trunk of heavy bones, loosely strung together, was supported by extremities, not much thicker, nor better shaped from the knees to the ancles, than the huge cudgel he always carried. At the time of our history, Roger was sergeant of the real Mayor of our town and its suburbs, including, of course, Wind-gap itself. And it was pretty well known that dame justice had no retainer in her service more mercenary than Roger Divey.

If one might judge by his external aspect, he was a man of sedate gravity; apparently somewhat stupid; and honest, without the slightest shrewdness or design. Herein, however, lay Roger's talent. Under the disguise of a sage and very uncomely owl, he hid the raven's cunning and rapacity. A lofty, pompous personage, withal, was Roger. Slowly and solemnly he strode along the streets, his head erect, and his every action full of that "pride of place" which he felt marked him as the holder of a station of much power and importance.

The morning after the bonfire on Wind-gap hill, Roger Divey was seen pacing through a certain street in the town, in which he officiated. Those in the habit of observing his outward expression, understood, by the settled dignity of his brow, and the severe and ominous protrusion of his nether lip, that he was proceeding on some errand of moment, connected with his calling. Opposite neighbours met half-way in the street, and put their heads together to express their conviction that he had weighty matters in hand; passengers, as they encountered him, stopped short and turned their eyes after the imposing official, each endeavouring to enlighten the other as to his probable destination.

Fully aware of the many enquiring looks directed towards his movements, Roger did not, however, vouchsafe to shew the slightest consciousness of the curiosity he excited. Filled with his own greatness, he strode onward; paused at the end of the street, and surveyed, with deliberate glance, a certain house. Then nodding his head sedately to himself, he moved three stately steps to the hall-door; calculatingly raised its knocker, and in his own good time, banged it down with such force that one might think the lion's head, moulded on it, had sent forth a roar.

After this tremendous challenge, Roger drew back some paces, and hit the head of his gigantic shillelagh against the paving stones. Stretching forth his right arm at full length, he rested the palm of his right hand upon it; fixed his left arm a-kimbo; boldly advanced his right leg before his person; threw back his head; and in this position awaited the result of his summons.

The door was opened by a frightened-looking serving wench: the figure of the landlady of the house appeared at some distance behind her.

"I say, you girl, you," demanded the man of authority, "would ye have one Masther George Blundell on the premishes, here?"

"E—ah!" was the only reply of the astonished and true Irish girl.

"Ye slut, ye!" continued Roger, "make thrue answer to such custions as shall be demanded o' ye, at your peril, do ye see me?"

"What may be your business with my lodger, Mr. Blundell?" questioned the landlady, coming forward.

"That's his own consarn, Misthress of the house, d'ye see me? Make known to the young gintleman, i' ye plaze, that we'd discoorse with him. We don't have a call to people for no rason."

"Mr. Blundell isn't yet up, I b'lieve," said the landlady.

"That makes no maxim, Marram. Up or down, it's all the same to us. Jest give him to undherstand that we'd hould some speech with him."

"You cannot see him now. You must call another time, my good fellow."

"Ha, hum, 'good fellow?' Who is it you lessen by the name of good fellow? Marram, we must see him, and we shall see him, or we'll know for what."

Roger, having spoken these words in a loud infallible voice, which filled the whole street, cast his eye towards a window over-head, and at it perceived the object of his enquiry looking down at him. He waved his arm magisterially, and continued—"Walk ye down here to us, young Master. Walk down here to us, d'ye see me?" Nor was this command given in a puny accent.

George Blundell was shortly on the threshold.

"What have you to say to me, Sirrah?"

"Ah, hum, 'Sirrah?' We are no Sirrah, my youth, we are no Sirrah. Isn't these purty doin's? purty doin's isn't they? By ye're lave, here, all o' ye, by your lave, d'ye see me?" Roger jostled through the group, which his bellowing and other noises had created, strode to the door-way, and, passing George Blundell, entered the hall of the house.

"What's to get ye clear out o' this prosecution, young master? There isn't a bail bond to be taken, if we don't give in to take it for ye?"

"Why are you disturbing the house, fellow? Let me know your errand at once, or I will thrust you into the street."

"Ha, hum, this kind o' talk won't sarve ye, when ye're afore his Worship, and myself. Its a burglary matther, let me tell ye. Many a stout fellow has died without being sick for a less charge, d'ye see me?"

"Explain yourself, or begone"—

"'Begone!' ha, hum. Would nothing do your turn, my young masther, but to make a burglary on the dwellin' house, *why at arums*, and to brake dours, and to take, force, and carry away a man's daughter from him? And wid sticks, stones, and staves, to say nothing o' swoords and pistols, to make *salt and butthery* on a man? Let me tell ye, d'ye see me, that we know how to dale wid sich doin's. And barrin' there's one to make the case clear for ye, ye'll be hard run to keep away from the hill beyant the river, where some people dance upon nothing, to save their shoes."

"You are under some mistake, fellow. Leave the house, and do not bring a crowd round the door."

"Hem, 'lave the house!' Is that all I'm to get for my warning?'

"Leave it instantly!" and George looked dangerous.

"And who's to stand for ye, when ye're afore the Mayor and me, d'ye see me?"

George took the man by the collar, and, without much exertion, led him to the threshold, and pushed him over it. At that moment his eyes rested upon a certain face and form in an opposite window. He bowed confusedly, retreated quickly, and shut the door on the outraged dignitary.

Roger had paid this early visit, in the way of pecuniary speculation. He calculated on being retained by George Blundell as an advocate, and had hoped to pocket by his services a good round sum. Now, it might have been supposed that in proportion to his seem-

ing failure, would be his wrath and disappointment. But, he not only felt no passion, but did not lose sight of his main object. He was not a hasty man, and he had his wits sufficiently about him to reckon that, with proper management, this assault on his sacred person, might eventually increase his profits. For Roger had never much objection to a slight drubbing: on the contrary, he considered such little events as among his means of gaining an honest livelihood. We have seen him put forward his as yet unofficial charge, against George Blundell, in the highest tone of exaggeration. This was also his uniform practice. The greater the terror he inspired in a guilty breast, the more heavy would be the retaining fee, for his pleading before the Mayor. Or if he thundered forth his accusations and threats upon an innocent person, the more likely would be the accused to fly out into a passion and break Roger's pate. And in that case, although the original process fell to the ground, he would be sure to make money by the "salt and butthery business."

To the mansion of the Mayor, (by the way, we have lately sketched a Mayor of a town and his sergeant, but trusting to the total dissimilarity between them and our present subjects, we cannot resist the temptation of presenting our readers with a companion-picture to the former one,) to the mansion of the Mayor, Roger wended his way. It was at that time the good old practice of the chief magistrates of the city to hold their court wherever they pleased: their private dwellings were, during their term of office, often transformed, therefore, into halls of justice. Wind and weather permitting, our present Mayor decided all cases in the open air, at least so far as regarded the positions of the plaintiffs and defendants before him. The house, occupied about fifty-five years ago by his Worship, is now in existence, and whatever might then have been thought of it, appears to us a very mean edifice. It is only two stories high; the whole of its first floor, as was also the case in Roger Divey's day, is used as a shop, of which the little bow-window still holds, we are assured by very old people, the self-same (to all appearance at least,) red-herrings, tallow candles, rows of tobacco, decanters of spirts, tea-cannisters, and so forth, and so forth, which it did in the eighteenth century.

One half of the Mayor's shop-door was raised up on hinges, and hooked against the ceiling: the top edge of the other half served as a resting-place for the Mayor's round elbows, when in an attitude half-standing, half-bending, and mainly supported by those elbows, he discharged his judicial functions; the complaining and the answering

parties being assembled meantime, as we before premised, in the street. By the charter of the city we treat of, it is decreed that "wise discreet citizens" shall be chosen to fill the several municipal offices. Unluckily, the instrument gives no datum by which one may ascertain what is to be considered wisdom and discretion in the said city: so that these qualities, legally specified as indispensable, have from time to time been very differently exemplified, in very different individuals.

Roger Divey had been dubbed, "Yallow Roger." His Worship the Mayor, who, on the arbitrary word of the interpreters of the charter, was a "wise and discreet citizen," had also received a surname, that of "Alderman Split-fig." Because, when weighing a penny-worth of figs in his shop, he would divide one of them into four parts, rather than give weight beyond the purchased complement. He had contrived, however, to amass a considerable sum of money, (considerable, acccording to his time and position,) chiefly by these very saving talents. We will at once admit that there can be no more valuable quality than the aptitude to get rich; and that it is our belief that, by the sense of much of the world, as well as by that of his constituents, our present Mayor gave, in the length of his purse, proof positive of "wisdom and discretion."

When Roger Divey arrived at the Mayor's place of audience, a crowd of suitors had assembled in the street, around the half-door, or hatch-way. At the appearance of the influential officer, all instantly flocked to him, and all began, in the same breath, to relate their different grievances, or to put forward their different defences. Roger authoritatively silenced this clamour; singled out the opposing parties, and led them, each in turn, into a lane that turned off at the corner of the Mayor's dwelling. There he listened to charge and reply; cried "Ha! ha!" "hem!" at proper intervals; occasionally nodded his sage head; and most condescendingly glanced out of the corner of his eye, into the palm of his hand, to ascertain the relative amount of each fee. For Roger was always retained on both sides. And the cases in this initiatory court were adjourned in the first instance, to the greasy counter in the Mayor's shop, where, before real trial, Roger further received from each disputant a little conciliation, in the shape of a glass of the peculiar kind of spirituous liquor which, by anxious calculation, could be concluded most acceptable to his palate. One giving him half a "naggin" of gin and bitters, another a dram of brandy, another a modicum of purl and gill, and so on. And all the while Roger left his group of clients doubtful of the side he should ultimately take.

There was a second adjournment into the street. The half-door was again closed and bolted, and at length his Worship appeared to his crowded court, leaning over it. His wig not being ready dressed, a red woollen night-cap covered his bald head, and an ample outside coat, sufficiently ample even for his dimensions, hung cloakwise from his shoulders, its sleeves falling down his back. We vault over his hatch-way, and land in his shop, to add that the knees of his black plush breeches were, even at this hour of the morning, yet unbuttoned; that his broad red garters, which lapped over and over in many folds, to tighten his light blue stockings, were visible a little above the round of his leg; and that his feet were in comfortable listen slippers.

His Worship was stricken in years; low, stout, and indeed undignified in figure; the opposite, in fact, of his chief officer. A pair of large grey protruding eyes, a broad flat nose; an under lip so conveniently pushing out, as to afford a comfortable resting-place for its upper fellow, and altogether a round plump face, shewed little of a physiognomical corroboration of the evidence supplied, on a certain point, by his long purse, namely, wisdom and discretion.

Giving his loose outside coat a twitch, in order to settle it round his shoulders, and then folding it comfortably under his arms, he leaned, as usual, both his elbows on the edge of the half-door, and quietly turned his leaden eyes up and down the street.

"The top o' the mornin' to your Worship"—began Roger, snatching off his three-cocked hat, scraping his hob-nailed brogues along the pavement, and accompanying this movement by a corresponding bend in his lathy figure.

"A good morning to you, kindly, Roger," answered his Worship, his gurgling voice making way with difficulty through his short, round throat. "And what thrials comes on to-day, Roger?"

In practical answer to this query, Roger at once proceeded in his accustomed capacity of counsel for and against. He brought forward plaintiffs and defendants in turn: he detailed with great deliberation, and much ostentation of manner, various cases, with the replies to each. Now it was that the amount of the fee had due effect. If, during his recital, the party whose advocate he had for the moment become, found himself misrepresented, and endeavoured in consequence to interrupt the statement, his Worship interposed, saying, with great quietude and complacency, "Asy now, asy! and let Roger tell it." Occasionally, however, the Mayor turned his eye heavily upon Roger's client, with an expression which indicated a sluggish wish to comprehend the orator's entanglement of a plain

story, had Heaven but blessed him with a due quantum of "wisdom and discretion." But, if in reply to such mute appeals, the plaintiff began to speak, the defendant was sure to start against him at the same moment, with the utmost power of his lungs and ingenuity. At which his Worship's perplexity becoming trebled, he was glad to fall back upon Roger's single puzzle; and his "Asy, asy now, good people, lave it to Roger"—would soon stop all clamour. For Roger scarce ever failed to impose silence under the good magistrate's authority.

"Well, Roger, and what do *you* think about it?" his Worship would ask, when both stories were recapitulated over and over. Roger, summing up evidence, in a masterly style, gave a decision, which the Mayor instantly adopted as his own. If any aggrieved person happened to expostulate—"Go your ways, go your ways, my good man—" was the signal for Roger to force off the grumbling suitor. Nor could the Mayor be in any instance accused of injustice. For, although his judgments were most frequently absurd, his intentions bore him harmless. It was not his fault that Roger's superior genius should keep his mind in leading strings: we must therefore in all fair dealing visit upon Roger exclusively the faulty administration of justice, in this rather slovenly court.

One man, amongst the complainants of the morning, seemed bursting with the magnitude of the case he had come to put forward, and with the intensity of the feeling it excited in his breast. Frequently he advanced to begin his story: Roger invariably thrust him back, to make way for others. In fact, whether from indigence, or because he regarded his grievance as sufficiently great to command immediate and full attention, this person had given Roger no retainer. But at length, every excuse for further delay was exhausted, and Roger could only look up and down the street in expectation of George Blundell's appearance. Finally, as that young gentleman chose to absent himself altogether, very contrary to the hopes of the venal advocate, the Mayor's sergeant determined to plead forcibly against him, merely that his services might in future be more properly estimated.

"Plaze your Worship," said Roger, "here's one Juff Carroll, d'ye see me; and he's from the Wind-gap abroad there, your Worship. He lives in his little cabin there, indhusterin' for his bread, d'ye see me; and we can put in bail, your Worship, that he's an honest hard-working crature of a man. And, by coorse, 'twas last night, your Worship"—

"Jest an hour afore the dawn of day," cried the applicant,

"when my darlin' Peggy and myself came home from the bonfire on Wind-gap hill; and we sed our little prayers, and we went to our beds.

"Whisth, whisth, Juff Carroll," interrupted Roger.

"Asy, asy now, my honest man! and let Roger tell it to me," decided the Mayor. We would vary his phraseology, but that by so doing, we should not be true to our original. His Worship invariably made use of the same words, on similar occasions; as if life, time, breath, and, above all things, intellect, were things too precious to be squandered on the vain attempt of trying to express the same thought in two different ways.

"This poor, honest Juff Carroll," resumed Roger, "who is here standing afore your worship, in the hoight of trouble, d'ye see me. He has a purty daughter, a purty honey, d'ye see me, your Worship."

"Is she a purty honey, indeed, Roger?" his Worship was always moved when Roger became oratorical.

"Oh! where's my Peggy now?" ejaculated the bereaved parent. "Where have they dragged her, from the father that doated on her, in his heart within him?"

"And you were fond of her in your heart, my poor man?" demanded the Mayor, suprising all who heard him with the abundance of his speech. But he had a daughter too.

"Why shouldn't I, your Worship? She was my only child! The mother of her left her to me on the bed where she was born! the light o' my eyes she was upon my flure, the comfort of my days!"

"Whist, whist now, Juff Carroll,"—interrupted the sergeant, getting jealous of Nature's spontaneous eloquence.

"Yes, asy my good man, asy now," added the Mayor, brushing the tears from his eyes, "asy, and let Roger tell it."

Accordingly Roger resumed, "'Twas last night, d'ye see me, your Worship, that the burglary and threspass was done on poor Juff Carroll. They broke open the dour of his cabin, *why at arums*, d'ye see me, your Worship, and the little daughter was taken, forced, and carried away from him."

"Dear me, dear me," sympathized the Mayor. "And tell me, Roger, does this honest poor man know the people that done the burglary and the threspass on him? hey, Roger?"

"I do, I do know," answered the father, too rapidly for Roger's interference. "I'd all as one swear my book oath that the man that sthruck me down was the sthrange man o' the Inch. And among the other men that were helpin' him, I'll swear there was one man wearin' the same cloak and the same hat that young George

Blundell had upon him, when I saw him in the sthrange man's company at the bonfire. The time that the sthrange man frightened my poor Peggy, by his unmannerly behaver to her, and by his evil words in her ear."

"What does he mane by the sthrange man o' the Inch, Roger?" asked the Mayor.

"Why, your Worship, 'tisn't out of your knowledge that there is one dangerous Tory of a man livin' at the wicked ould house at the Inch, abroad there. He's an ould offendher, d'ye see me—we had him up more than onst, afore your Worship. And since then, he goes on with more wickeder plottin's and doin's than ever, out at the Inch, and"—

A smart tap from an open palm on Roger's shoulder interrupted his narrative. Offended and angry of the freedom, he turned quickly round: the strange man of the Inch was at his elbow. The father of Peggy Carroll, without power to utter a word, stared, gaped, pointed, and chattered his teeth at the dreaded visiter.

The strange man was now dressed differently from his costume of the preceding night. A black silk handkerchief yet covered indeed, one eye and part of one cheek. Over the other side of his face fell the peak of his laced cocked hat: to the fancy of some detesting observers, it seemed to borrow a corresponding fierceness, and to become somehow frightfully indentified with the flaming ball which it shaded. His coat was of scarlet cloth, embroidered with gold lace, his small clothes were black satin, his stockings black silk, and his well-polished shoes were adorned with sparkling silver buckles.

There was a malicious, confident jocularity of manner about the strange man, as he moved into the lane, at the corner of the Mayor's house, beckoning Roger Divey to follow him. Roger, comprehending, at a glance, the meaning of his invitation, instantly accepted it. For a few moments he and his formidable confidant stood there within the recess of a gate-way. The strange man did not re-emerge into the main street, but Roger duly re-appeared before the Mayor. Peggy Carroll's father was disjointedly proceeding in his tale of grievance.

"Juff Carroll, hould your tongue," interrupted Roger, and the Mayor pronounced his usual command for silence. Roger gravely addressed the chief magistrate:

"Your Worship, poor Juff Carroll, that's here to the fore, and an honest crature of a man he is, d'ye see me, has a bad case to argufy afore your Worship. We'll all do our endavors to rightify him, and to bring the offendhers undher the law, and why not,

see me. More betoken, since they made *salt and batthery* agin the person of Juff Carroll hisself—not to talk of the burglary and of the carrying away, by force and arums, o' the poor purty dhaughter of him. 'Twas the greatest murdher, ever you seen, your Worship, that he hadn't the light o' the day, or even a bit of a candle, or a rish-light itself, or a thing o' the kind, that 'ud help him to see, and to 'dentify the house-breakers that sthruck him down on the flure of his own little cabin, into a swoon, like, in sich a way, (the villains!) that he couldn't see 'em if he had the full light o' the day itself, because people's eyes are shet, when there's a wakeness on them. An' 'twould be against the law to let wicked people be free that broke the pace a second time, on the body of poor Juff Carroll, and dhragged his dhaughter, as aforesaid, over her father's threshold, afther committing burglary upon the dour of the cabin. All the while that the poor sufferin' man couldn't tell from Adam who made him fall down into the swoon."

"He that forced off my Pegyy," cried out Juff Carroll, "was here a moment agone! That was the robber of my child, and young Blundell was helpin' of him."

"Asy now, asy, poor man, God help ye! You'll put Roger out: let Roger tell it to me. Well, Roger?" interposed the Mayor.

"There's foolish people, plaze your Worship, that talks o' the jontleman livin' in the ould house at the Inch, abroad there. Bud we'll put in good 'sponsible bail for him, afore your Worship, that he's nothin' but a quiet, dacent man, and that he'd no more commit a burglary on poor Juff Carroll's dour, *why at arums*, no more nor we'd do it ourselves, afther a manner, d'ye see me, your Worship. But if we can come, by hook or crook across the bad boys that have done the harum to this poor crature o' a man, (poor Juff Carroll that's to the fore,) won't we lay the heavy hand on 'em, and for why not, d'ye see me, your Worship?"

There were violent efforts, on the part of the agonized father, to fix his charge on the person now praised in the speech of the mercenary officer. But peace and quiet were placidly recommended by the Mayor, and obstreperously insisted on by Roger.

"Ah, your Worship, he's a very, very honest jontleman, livin' quiet and asy at the Inch. A nate peaceable house, your Worship, all alone by itself, out of harum's way. As for young Masther Blundell, if the crature of a dhaughter belonging to this poor honest man was to stay in poor Juff's cabin till she ran to seed into an ould granny, he's never the boy that 'ud lay a finger on her. He's the most modestest of all the boys, gentle or simple, that your Worship

and I has the throuble of lookin' afther. And so, your Worship, d'ye see me, we'll do our endavours to saize the raal offendhers, by this stick in my hand, Juff Carroll," he continued, turning to the now desponding parent—" we'll see the just thing done by you, in time and rason. For his Worship the Mayor, does right and thrue by every sowl that comes afore his face, d'ye see me!"

The case was decided. In vain did Juff Carroll aver that he was " a'most proof positive," that the strange man of the Inch was the ruffian that plundered him of his child, and that George Blundell was one of his disguised accomplices. Roger still contended, and very plausibly too, according to the Mayor's opinion, that Juff could not at any period of the affray have distinguished the persons of his assaulters and destroyers, because, eventually, he had lain insensible under their hands. And poor Juff at last plodded his way homeward, to Wind-gap, comforted solely by the slender shadow of promise given by Roger Divey, to see justice done to him. The last words which struck his ear, while turning his back on the judgment seat, were those of his Worship the Mayor.

" God help ye, poor man! go your ways now; 'tis a very sorrowful thing for ye. But don't you hear what Roger says? Go your ways, go your ways."

CHAPTER VII.

We are sorry that there hangs over George Blundell, according to his own account, at least, some of the old threadbare mystery of parentage, and so forth, and wish that we could, as faithful historians, skip it altogether, or else give him at once, in the eyes of the world, a respectable house-keeping Father and Mother. Against our will, however, we are bound to report of him the morsel of romance which he asserted about himself. From his twelfth year to his twentieth, (he was now nearly twenty-one,) he had been receiving his education in the eminent college of the town where he at present resided, and his remittances had been invariably liberal. When questioned by his class-mates, in the bold intrusive way in which boys will question one another, as to who, and what he was, George Blundell stated himself to be the son of a wealthy merchant, a native of Ireland, who resided in a foreign country. At first this

brief explanation appeared satisfactory. But, unfortunately for his quiet, the lad distinguished himself by the intensity of his application to his studies, and consequently by extraordinary progress and scholastic superiority. Now, it was found out that his station in life, or his social position, was sufficiently doubtful to alarm his aristocratic young school-fellows, and George was insulted. But those who outraged his feelings suffered for their temerity. He proved himself a fierce fighter as well as an eclipsing student. In fact, when his passion was roused, he took any odds in years, weight, or height, and always thrashed his man.

One or two other features of his character at school may be noticed. In the athletic sports of his companions, such as foot-ball, wrestling, and so forth, he did not often join. Most frequently while they ran riot over the beautiful lawn that stretched from the college to the water's edge, he sought a quiet nook, with his favourite authors. Yet, occasionally, when the game or pastime of the day was particularly exciting, he would start up from his loneliness, fling aside his books, enter into the contest, for agile superiority, as eagerly as if it were a question of life and death. But when the palm of excellence became unwillingly ceded to him, he would again quietly and gravely, and with all his previous devotedness, return to his voluntary studies. Thus his boyish days promised a manhood of deep enthusiasm, no matter what might prove to be its momentary object, while his talents for attaining any thing, coupled with his fiery and overbearing spirit, swept all competition before him. Such a character bid fair for eminence, either in vice or in virtue, according as it might be directed. Now we turn to other matters.

Peggy Carroll, whom we have just seen carried off, according to her father's account, by the man of the Inch, was the foster-sister of Annie Kennedy: in many points poor Peggy was as dear to Annie as if they had really been sisters. The news, therefore, of the girl's abduction greatly afflicted Annie Kennedy; with her young attendant, a first cousin of Peggy's, she shed many tears over the misfortune. But those tears flowed, perhaps, as readily on another account. It was soon no secret, all over the town, that Juff Carroll had charged George Blundell as an accomplice in the outrage which deprived him of his child. Annie could not close her ears against the rumour; and although his Worship the Mayor had decided that it was only a misconception, yet, did fear and doubt and terror possess the young girl's heart. The more particularly as she had been an eye-witness of Roger Divey's visit to the house of her lover

and of George's violent ejection of him into the street. A piece of bravadoism, by the way, which, in Annie's estimation, he need not have enacted, had he felt himself calmly innocent of the serious accusation laid at his door.

Jeoffry Carroll lived down by the river-side. His cabin was the very last within the jurisdiction of the Mayor of Wind-gap: moreover, it stood not more than a quarter of a mile from the widely celebrated house of the Inch. In Jeoffry's humble abode, Annie and her maid Grace had spent many happy days of their infancy. Thither about the noon of the morning of the investigation before the Mayor, they bent their steps; and there, from poor Jeoffry's own tongue, they received a confirmation of all they had previously heard. Nay, the afflicted and loquacious man, talking himself, hour after hour, into certainty upon points which he had before but strongly believed, at present averred that, beyond all doubt, George Blundell was one of the abductors of his daughter. And now Annie's grief and despair at least equalled his. After some time spent in vain endeavours to console Juff Carroll, the two young girls began to retrace their way homeward. They were close to a lane which, shaded by bushes on either hand, led directly to the water's edge, and were about to enter it, when Annie Kennedy drew back in terror, for within it she heard the accents of George Blundell, although she could not see his person. And he was engaged in conversation with another man, whose harsh, abrupt tones conveyed a startling anticipation to her heart.

"One word more, one sound more, from your lips, Sir, and you shall repent it," said the strange bad voice, in a most dictatorial tone—"From that instant I throw you upon your own flourishing resources. You must wait my time, Sir, and nothing else will I hear on the subject."

"But while I wait your time, she may be lost to me for ever," replied George Blundell.

"That is nothing to the purpose, Sir.—But tell me, what like girl is this, who has so caught your foolish fancy? this Annie Kennedy?"

"She is such, even in person, that words of mine would fail to describe her."

Notwithstanding her terror, and all her agonizing misgivings, the true woman at these words fluttered for an instant in Annie's heart. Truth to say, she felt rather obliged to George Blundell.

"Snap her up, Sir—snap her up. It can only be herself you want, and herself is easily had for a little courage. Let me tell

you, boy, that a woman is like a gallant vessel on the sea, though still weaker than the ship that encounters her, and the sooner you come to close action, the sooner she strikes her colours: for this you may take the word of one who knows both the ship at sea, and woman in every clime."

"I fear," resumed George, "that the accusation in which I am involved may have reached her ears—If I might only explain to her, or try, ever so confidentially, to—"

"Tut, tut, Sir! not a syllable.—Never shall she be yours, that is, with my assistance, if you open your lips to her on the matter."

Annie stood pale and breathless at these words—It suddenly occurred to her, that she should avoid the observation of George Blundell and of this unknown arbiter of his destinies, and the wish was fearfully increased, when she heard their footsteps approaching. Her only mode of retreat, however, was along the field-path by which she had approached the lane: this was unprotected by any covering or screen; so that she could hope to remain out of their view only for a few moments. While still hesitating and trembling, George Blundell and his companion, suddenly issuing from the lane, were close to her. At sight of her, the former seemed overwhelmed with amazement and confusion: the latter started into an attitude of bold and intrusive interest, and fixed a daring look upon her face.

"The sthrange man!—the sthrange man o' the Inch!" whispered Annie's attendant, grasping her misthress by the arm. Agitated as the girl herself was, she felt that poor Grace Carroll shook in a very palsy of fear.

But Annie took her resolution and her course at once: onward she hurried, in as quick a pace as she could use, Grace Carroll still holding her arm, and trotting at her side. George Blundell addressed her, but she had passed him before the words reached her ears: she heeded him not, but hastened onward.—He called her by name: she did not notice him. She heard his foot behind her. Identified as he now clearly stood with the evil person in whose company she had found him, her impulse was to run with all her might from her lover; but she checked the nervousness, by a recollection that such an act would be beneath her.

"Dearest Annie, why do you shun me thus?" asked George Blundell, when he had come up with her—She again tried to quicken her pace, but did not answer him. He kept close at her side, and besought her to speak. She glanced hastily behind her; the strange man was not in view—a turn in the lane had hidden him from her. She felt somewhat relieved, yet could not, without an effort, command her breath to say—

"Mr. Blundell, I had rather walk alone."

"Annie, Annie, what can be the meaning of this? Why do you shun to-day the man you did not shun yester evening?"

Annie was again silent, but still walked briskly on—her movements a little retarded by the way, in consequence of the heavy weight, in the shape of Grace Carroll, which dragged down her arm.

"Annie, is it possible, my Annie, that you can give credit to those absurd rumours raised against me? Do you really think me guilty, Annie, of what they lay to my charge?"

She stopped suddenly, and looking down for an instant, answered him, for a girl, with sternness—

"Mr. Blundell, it is not for me to pronounce an opinion on your guilt, or your innocence. But, as calmly and as firmly as my foolish fright, and my true indignation, permit, I tell you that, even with the bare imputation on your character of the crimes to which you allude, it is more than presumptuous in you to address me at present, as you do."

"Presumptuous, dearest Annie? presumptuous, did you say?" repeated her lover, in tones even less assured than her own.

"Yes, Sir, presumptuous. Do you suppose that, even in the coldest intercourse of society, I can ever again speak with a man who has violated the sanctity of a virtuous roof, and dragged a daughter from a father's arms? Or, Sir, do you suppose, have you dared to suppose, that I ever could have interchanged even the slightest intimacy with him, had I imagined he was capable of such an act?"

"Annie, I swear to you by the—"

"George Blundell, your coming oath is a new affront—I am a woman and a lady, and not yet at your mercy, to listen to it."

"Oh! Annie—most beloved Annie—I know not what to say—"

"Neither do I know, Sir, what you may say. But I know perfectly well what you ought to do. Listen to me, Mr. Blundell—I loved, and I do love my foster-sister, Peggy Carroll: I have spoken with her bereaved and heart-broken father. Although a humble girl, she was virtuous—to say nothing of her being very lovely; she was a sensible and discreet girl too, and used to act as a kind of elder sister towards me. Go, Sir, to your bad companion—the disreputable man you have just parted from—go to him, Sir, and persuade him to restore my poor Peggy to her father. Let her be rtstored, Mr. Blundell, as you found her, and as I knew her. But, at all events, Sir,—Oh, *do* restore her to her father!" and the girl, breaking down in her appeal, wept bitter tears.

"My God!" groaned Blundell, "I see I am lost for ever!"

There was such deep affliction in the tones of his voice as he uttered these few words, that they struck like a knell on Annie's ear. She could not avoid glancing up into his face, and its expression touched her heart. Woe, and despair of the deepest hue, were there. It claimed compassion; and the good, the pure, and the gentle-hearted girl involuntarily afforded it her full pity. For, indeed, she argued—if in her agitation she could be supposed to have reasoned on the subject—it did not express callous profligacy, but only of intense, inward suffering.

"Well, well, George,—Mr. Blundell, I meant to say—what is your answer to me at last?" Her beautiful little lips were now trembling, and convulsed with an effort to cease from her weeping

"Annie," he answered, mournfully, "you are right. I do not blame you; I blame, no matter whom—or what—but that you are present, I could curse my fate, and the day of my birth. It is true, very true, that you should not hold the most ordinary intercourse with a person accused as I am. I will not, therefore, intrude upon you. But, at a future time, perhaps, when I may possibly be able to cast the imputation from me, your first scorn may abate, and—"

"You *will* restore Peggy Carroll to her father?" interrupted Annie.

"At present," answered George Blundell, "I make but this simple declaration—I am guiltless of the young woman's abduction. Professions of principle are nothing. It will, and, under my circumstances, it ought to avail me little to say, that I contemn and detest such proceedings. I ought to be able to prove my general assertion, in the particular case you speak of, or my words are as the wind. I only add, Annie, that if it be in my power to restore Peggy Carroll to her Father, the good deed shall be done," He took off his hat, and bowed low and solemnly.

Even against her sense of all the proprieties, Annie felt half inclined towards a longer parley, but she resisted the temptation, and ceremoniously returning his salutation, passed sagely on. Turning the last point of a curve on her path, she happened, almost without her own wish, to glance back. George Blundell was standing motionless on the spot where she had left him, his hat yet in his right hand; his eyes following her, his left hand pressed across his temples. It was very uncalculating of the girl, that at this sight her compassion outweighed her sense of injury, and that fresh tears—but now not for Peggy Carroll—glistened in her eyes.

"Oh, Miss Annie!" said Grace Carroll, as they proceeded along, "did you ever know such loock as we had this day, to get clear of them so well?"

"Very true, Grace, very true," the young lady answered, scarcely knowing the nature of the question she replied to. On she walked, her eyes cast down, and her thoughts absorbingly occupied. Her companion continued—

"Did livin' look ever rest on so terrible a man, as that sthrange Man o' the Inch, Miss Annie? Och! it's a mercy there's but one eye in his head, or nobody at all could stand before him, they say. There's not a young crature he stares at that doesn't come to sorrow by him—Poor cousin Peggy, poor cousin Peggy, what a lot is yours!—But—the Lord above be our guard and protection," she suddenly added, pulling at the arm of her mistress. Annie was startled; she raised her eyes. They had just turned another quick curve of the path-way, which led them homeward: the man they so much disliked and feared was again before them. The green lane barely allowed two persons to walk on abreast: had they gone on, they must, therefore, have separated, and each in turn have come alone into close contact with the person of the strange Man o' the Inch, who, as if to increase their difficulty, stood in the middle of the way. The terrified girls necessarily paused. Grace Carroll's feet were scarce able to support her, and her mistress, though endeavouring to summon up her utmost courage, did not feel much calmer.

"Will the charming Annie excuse me for waylaying her in this manner?" said the intruder, while the eye which Grace Carroll so much dreaded, seemed to flash fire on the young lady he addressed. "But one glance of such beauty as your's only arouses the wish for a second."

"Allow us to pass on, Sir," said Annie Kennedy, as proudly as her sinking and frightened heart would allow.

"I perceive, fair lady, that fools have been filling your head with silly stories about me. In fact, the good folks of these parts want to make a kind of buggaboo of me, to frighten their children, and grown-up young people with. I should expect more sense, as well as more charity, from such a countenance as yours, Miss Kennedy. Doubtless, you can laugh, as I assure you I do, with very great amusement, at those absurd stories. For," advancing on her, "I swear by this fair hand"—

"Back, Sir!" interrupted Annie, herself recoiling—"Dare you insult *me?*"

"Insult you! By the fire under ground, beautiful girl, I would not stand by and see the shadow of an offence offered to you! But, being beautiful, how can yon avoid paying its penalty of a little sincere admiration?"

Annie's feelings were such as we may suppose to agitate one suddenly thrust into a wild beast's den, who is afraid to arouse the animal's savage nature, even by a single movement.

"Well, Sir, I suppose I ought to feel thankful for your flattering opinion. But, Sir, we are strangers to each other, and—"

"I know that"—interrupted this certainly strange man, "and my business here, therefore, naturally is to try for the honour of your acquaintance."

"Sir," trembling visibly, possibly to the secret amusement of her tormentor, "the impropriety of such a thing must, I should hope, be very evident. I would pursue my way with my maid, if it please you—"

"Your maid?—Oh—aye—" and here Grace Carroll came in for her passing share of the regards of the one eye which she held in much more abhorrence than ever, we are sure, did the sage Ulysses that of the chief Cyclop. Instantly she dropped on her knees; hid her face in her hands, worked the points of her shoes into the dust of the path, and cried out—"Och! Sir—no—not me—not me—and the Lord be good to ye!"

"Get up, you foolish wench, and run home as fast as you can," laughed the strange man, whose interest seemed not very much created by the plain, though good-natured, features of poor Grace.

"Ah, then, won't I, Sir, and thank ye!" shouted the terrified girl, feeling the touch of his hand upon her shoulder. Every thing forgotten, even the safety of her idolized mistress, up to her feet sprang Grace, and onward she raced, loudly yelling and clapping her hands.

"This is too insolent," said poor Annie—trying to pass her tormentor, by almost imitating Grace's example, and running—

"Your hand, then, at least, to say good-bye," continued the strange man, endeavouring to suit his action to his word.

"Touch me not," the girl screamed, snatching away her hand, and bounding backwards—"O God! is there no resource against insult like this?"

"Your sarvant, Miss Annie—and your sarvant again, my good Sir;" said Maurteen Maher, close at the strange man's back. Annie, with an audible gasp of relief, sprang to him, and seized one of his arms, whispering, "save me! oh! save me, good friend!"

"Well, Miss Annie, well," said the Mayor of Wind-gap, affecting a simple jocularity of manner: "I often hard it said, and now it's the b'lief I'll die in, that you are the most free-hearted, comical young lady, that ever we had among us. Sure it's a high joke to

see ould Maurteen Maher made prisoner by the purtiest crature the sun shines on. Did ever sich a thing come to your knowledge afore, Sir?" Maurteen continued, appealing very innocently to the strange man.

"Faiks, and surely I ought to cock my head higher than ever I did. But, Miss Annie, I'll tell you how 'tis to be, this prasent time—the road is too narrow for three of us, and so we must take our way down the hill, over the river." Almost while he spoke, the Mayor of Wind-gap suddenly guided her from where they stood, and ran with her down the hill of which he had spoken.

The strange man, strange as he was, did not attempt to follow them; only gaining a point from which he could note the progress of the old fellow, and his charge. During his retreat, Maurteen would occasionally look up, and address a word to his strangeship, while under his breath he encouraged his companion, telling her to fear nothing.

About half way down the descent of the hill, there were high clumps of furze and young trees—and, notwithstanding the Mayor's exhortations, Annie's courage began again to fail her, as she heard issuing from the obscurity they made, a wild wailing voice.

"Come out o' that, you poor frightened crature," said Maurteen, "and thank God that gave *me* the sense, when it pleased him to lave you without any, to find you runnin' away from your poor misthress, and to hide you where you could meet her again. Arn't ye sorrowful, ye poor *skreed** of a crature?" continued Maurteen, as the half-calmed girl appeared—"arn't ye sorrowful, in your heart, for havin' desarted your young misthress, in her sore need?"

"Oh then, indeed and indeed I am—" sobbed Grace, but now more tranquilly than before, as she a second time fell on her knees, and clasped and kissed her mistress's hand.

Maurteen, now doubly charged, a girl hanging upon each arm, continued his way towards and by the river side. He thought he might by this time have escaped the observation of an eye, which he did not always wish to follow his motions. But seeing the strange man still within view, though at a distance, he resumed with a very primitive laugh, "Now, arn't they merry souls, Sir? see here, Sir; see how they're makin' their own sport of the ould man. *Bonnacth lath*,† Sir. God be wid ye, Sir."

"And now, Miss Annie," continued the Mayor of Wind-gap, when they really lost sight of their bugbear, "hould yourself up, and never

* Atom. † Good-bye.

be daunted. I thought it the best way to come off quiet and asy; its ever the wisest plan. He saw well enough that you were frightened out of your seven senses at him; and I have a notion—for he sees far with his one eye—that he guessed I was no fool, though I spoke so simple. But no matther. It wouldn't answer either him or me, to come to cross purposes at all."

"I suppose, my good friend, it was not by accident you came to our relief?" asked Annie.

"And indeed, you suppose the truth, my gra. Do you remember, that of a May evening, I promised you I'd be your friend? I didn't lose sight of that promise. People told me that you came to-day, out o' good nature, to poor Juff Carroll's cabin. When I hard that, I was watchin' after you, for some time; and I saw that ould fox makin' a short cut to be afore ye, on your path. And, as I knew more about the short cuts, in these places, than he could know—he being only the sthrange Man at the Inch, after all, I thought I could forestal him. So, Miss Annie, at the time I came up wid ye, there were five or six sthrong young men from Wind-gap, lying in the ditch, that's now over your head. For, although I always had a mind to thry aisy manes, I thought, at that present time, that if the sthrange man shewed any fight against me, in your regard, one whistle on my finger would make him be tumbled head over heels into the river. But we were not called on to attempt that; we have our own way, any how, widout it. And that's the aisiest way; and the best way, too. For, as I often said afore, the aisy way is the best way."

"You dear old man," cried the now re-assured girl, "I could almost kneel to you, to thank you."

"Very sorry I'd be," said Maurteen Maher, "to see you spiling your nice white gownd, goin' on your knees wid it, on the grass, for a sarvice not worth a *thrawneen*. But you, Grace Carroll, have *you* never a word for me?" suddenly asked the Mayor.

"Me! me! Maurteen Maher—me! Mayor o' Wind-gap—" cried Grace, not yet quite unpuzzled from her late dilemma—"Och! what can I say or do? What can I do wid myself at all?"

"Well, well, don't thry to spake a word, a cuish-la, if that's what plases you best. Don't be so foolish, either, ma colleen; sure he couldn't ate the two o' ye, at the one meal, any how. You may b'lieve my word, tisn't yourself he'd choose to begin with, if he was ever so hungry."

"Night and day, noon and mornin', I'll be offerin' up my prayers for you, Misther Maher," said Grace Carroll.

"That same will do me no harm, a cuishla. 'But now I'll tell ye both what I think. We are nigh hand to the houses, an' there would be a hulloloo, and a high clappin' of hands over all Wind-gap, far and near, if I was fool enough to show my face among the people with Miss Annie Kennedy houldin' one of my limbs, and Grace Carroll almost pulling the other out o' my body. Let me see if ye can stand alone."

"Oh! do not leave us, my good friend!" besought Annie.

"I'll hould my hould;" said her companion, valiantly.

"By the thruth o' a man," smiled Maurteeen, "I wish in my heart I was young an' well lookin', for your sake, Grace Carroll; and I wish I was the same, over again, and dhrivin' a gilt coach and six, for your sake, Miss Annie. I have no notion at all to go from ye, my darlin's. But, let me tell ye, I must mind myself well, because people look up to me: I never could hould rule in Wind-gap, if the neighbours were to see me, walkin' in among 'em, gallvantin' the both of ye, in this manner. I'll stay wid ye, ma-vourneens, only I'll be a little way off. There's nothing to be afeard of now, Grace; and if Miss Annie can walk widout staggerin' like a body in liquor, I'll go on afore ye, an' ye can follow in my steps."

The experiment was tried, and mistress and maid discovered that they could get on very well without support. They entered a suburb street, at the foot of the ascent to the Mayor of Wind-gap's dominions.

"Come after me, if it be plasing to ye, Miss Annie," resumed his Worship. "And you too, Grace Carroll, come after me into the house you'll see me enter, I've something to say to the both o' ye."

They obeyed his directions. Half way up the hill, he led the way into a very comfortable looking cabin; and here Gregory Roche, the Mayor's junior counsel, welcomed them with many bows and scrapes, dusted, with his weaver's apron, two chairs, and placed them for the visiters.

"Now, Gregory, go into your work—I want to have some discoorse, here, with Miss Annie. And when I cough, come out again, and show us your manners, if nothing else, as well as you know how."

"Mayor of Wind-gap, I'll be led and said by you, and for why not? Young lady, I wish health an' happiness to you. Jeffery Carroll's niece, God be wid ye." And the mannerly Gregory bowed himself away.

"Now, Miss Annie," continued Maurteen Maher, "I brought ye here for two reasons. First, that ye might rest yourself; rest will

be good for you, before you go through the town; for I saw you were sorely frightened a little while agone—"

"Oh, indeed, indeed I was," assented the young lady.

"I don't wonder. And it isn't to frighten ye more, that I am goin' to spake further to ye; but I want to put you on your guard, Miss Annie—You'd do a right thing to stay within your dour, for the present. You are not the kind of a body that would come to much good, by often crossin' the path o' the sthrange Man o' the Inch, or to let him be crossin' yours."

"What can you mean? This is very foolish, or very terrible indeed."

"Don't let the words give you terror, Miss Annie, for all that—I'll tell ye something more. You may place your dependence on me; I have knowledge over him, and I have power over him; and I'll use the one, and the other, in such a way that he can never do you a harm. But we'll have some speech on this head another time: that time must not be far off neither. But for the present time, there's other business. The second reason why I brought you in here was, because I had some news to tell ye, Miss Annie, and you too, into the bargain, Grace, on the head of one Peggy Carroll."

The two girls started, and put many questions to Maurteen.

"She is safe, and sound, and well,"—answered the Mayor, smiling; "without hurt or sorrow, beyond the fright she got. Only *that's* enough to make her remember the Man of the Inch, to her dyin' day. And it will give you faith in me, on your own account, Miss Annie, and 'twill make ye b'lieve I can do things other people cannot do, when I tell ye the Mayor of Wind-gap saved Peggy Carroll from that very man."

Grace Carroll asked no questions, uttered no words, but ran to the Mayor, threw her arms around his neck, and kissed him until he was tired of the pastime.

"Come, come, Grace, he said, "we must behave ourselves dacent—you'll get for me a disrespectful name among the neighbours. There, ma-colleen, sit down, and listen to all about it."

Poor Grace resumed her seat, wiping the tears from her eyes with her apron, and giggling, blushing, and ashamed of her ecstasies.

In great astonishment, Annie Kennedy enquired how he had been able to accomplish his good work?

"I have a notion," answered Maurteen, "that Peggy Carroll will tell her own story in the best fashion, and more to your likin' than I could."

"She is here! she is in this house!" cried Annie, springing from

her seat, while Grace pranced wildly round and round her mistress, laughing loudly, and of course clapping her hands.

"She is undher this roof, of a sartinty," answered the Mayor. "Before it came to my knowledge that you and Grace there—(Grace, you scatter-brain, behave yourself quiet, I bid ye)—we're goin' to Juff Carroll's cabin, it was my mind to be wid him afore ye, and let him into the sacret. But ye put the thought out o' my head, for that present time. And though Peggy slept here the best part o' last night, I wouldn't undecaive Juff airly in the morning, because he wouldn't then go wid his complaint to that ould *gommu-lagh*, the Mayor o' the town. So the Man o' the Inch would guess Juff knew where she had been taken to, and that wouldn't be the safest way—Howsomever, poor Juff will soon larn all about it, and his ould heart will be set at ease—But it would never do to take Peggy to her father, for there might be a watch set for her, there-abouts, and she can keep close here for a while, and no one the wiser."

The sage Mayor coughed twice, very audibly, as he finished this explanation, and the mannerly Gregory Roche accordingly re-appeared, ushering in the emancipated damsel, who was instantly in the arms of her foster-sister, and nearly as instantly in those of her real blood relation, Grace.

"There's a kind of a bird," the Mayor went on, when the simple transports of this meeting had been interchanged—"that tells me of many things that happen, and many things that will happen. Whether its a jackdaw, or a magpie, or a *shawneen-blackcap*, makes no maxim. But I knew before it came to pass what was to happen to poor Peggy"—(here, even his faithful historians half doubt the assertions of the Mayor of Wind-gap—but let that pass)—"To be sure, if I had a likin' for such kind o' ways, I might have got some of my boys together, and given a good *lamb-basting** to some of the people that wanted to take her away—and so have kept her from their hands by main force, in the first going off. But Maurteen Maher has a way of his own, in the doin' of these things. Any fool can fight. But the plan that does what you want without fighting, and in an aisy, quiet way, with a little thought in it, is more to my notion. So now, Peggy, my lanna, tell all about your misfortunes and your scrapes".

A few words are enough to condense Peggy's recital of her adventure. She went homeward from the excelling bonfire at Wind-gap, still agitated even to fear, by the actions, and more particularly

* Thrashing.

by the words, of the strange Man of the Inch. At the moment of offence, she did not recognise the person of her tormentor, as that of the universally-dreaded individual. But the strange man, upon occasions when he had encountered her near her father's house, at the river side, had previously expressed himself in a similar way; and Peggy, therefore, concluded that the individual who broke up the enjoyment of her dance on St. John's-eve, could be no other than the way-layer of her private walks. To aid her opinion, although his face and person were well disguised, some tones of the voice carried conviction to her heart. Therefore she had screamed aloud, during the festivity of the bonfire, but had mentioned no name. When the Mayor's bailiff, and his attendant came to her assistance, she could identify her troublesome neighbour only by pointing in a terrified manner at him. So that when the strange Man of the Inch, and with him his associate, were taken before the judgment seat of the Mayor of Wind-gap, no one, before his disguise fell off, imagined whom they had to deal with, in the person of the chief prisoner.

Peggy and her father had just retired to rest, after the excitements of the evening, when the door of the cabin was broken open, and four men, disguised in masks and cloaks, bore her forcibly away.

Her eyes were uncovered, so that she could distinguish the road along which she was carried.—She arrived at the house of the Inch, but was not immediately conveyed into it. A door, in one of the enclosing walls of its premises, opened for her; she entered a garden, and was locked into a turret or summer-house, as it was called, immediately over the river. In this position, Peggy was abandoning herself to despair, when she heard a key turn in the lock of a door opposite to that through which she had been pushed into her unwilling retreat. The well-known voice of the Mayor of Wind-gap called upon her. She committed herself to his care. He locked his own door, as he called it, after him; descended three or four steps to the water; placed Peggy in a very small boat—indeed, a kind of Indian canoe; paddled silently and swiftly across the stream to the opposite bank: hurried her through a long public promenade, at this time of night quite deserted; walked her through the whole of the town again, from one side of the river to the other, and at last deposited her in the safe and respectable place of refuge in which our other friends have found her.

The Mayor of Wind-gap seemed not a little vain of the admiration of his tact, and ingenuity, and prowess, which this history impressed upon the minds of his hearers. Like most ambitious men, he wished to creep on, step by step, through society. In the same

way that he had at first puzzled the brains of the good people of Wind-gap, he seemed now delighted to astonish the comprehension of Miss Annie Kennedy. Nor, if this were truly his view, can it be said that he was unsuccessful. For Annie had received as much proof of Maurteen's power to counteract, on the occasion of Peggy Carroll's abduction, the wiles and villanies of the strange Man of the Inch, as she could hope to have of his capability, according to his promise, of assisting herself in any case of emergency.

"And, oh! Mayor of Wind-gap," said Grace, "whenever we get up in the mornin' from our beds, and whenever we lie down at night, it is we that will always be returnin' our thanks to you, and our prayers too, above, for your good health, and your long reign over Wind-gap!—And if there's ever a thing to do us hurt or harm in the town below, it's to you we'll come, and not to the foolish ould Mayor, that has only the name of a Mayor in that place."

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Connor Kennedy, a man of very considerable property "in the town below," wished to have it understood that Annie Kennedy was the daughter of a distant relation, who had died in another country, leaving her to his care. But his tale was very generally discredited. Whispering rumours *would* say, that Mr. Connor Kennedy was himself the father of the fair Annie—although we regret to add, according to the same authority, he had never been married to her unknown mother.

It will be recollected that the old story-tellers at the bonfire at Wind-gap, spoke of one, who, having been rescued from penury by young Harry Stokesbury, had contrived to inherit the young man's paternal property, and also to espouse for himself the young lady intended as Harry's bride. The tragedy attending this double deception has also been talked over by the old people. The needy cousin, reported to have acted so treacherously to his violent-tempered patron, was no other than Annie's guardian, or, as the case might really be, Annie's parent. Connor Kennedy recovered very slowly from the wounds inflicted on him by the outrageous Harry Stokesbury: the shock sustained by his nerves, never of a strong texture, he was not able to throw off. Ever since, however, he had

enjoyed the undisturbed possession of the wealth so unfairly come by; to all of which, it was said, Annie was heiress.

Notwithstanding his dreadful retaliation for the wrongs he had suffered, young Stokesbury's banishment from his home, and his subsequent trials, and miserable death created considerable sympathy in his favour. Many, indeed, thought that the treachery to which he had been a victim gave ample warrant for any species of revenge on the person of its author. So that Connor Kennedy was scarce regarded, by the generality of his neighbours, in any other light than that of a wily, ungrateful, and perhaps only sufficiently punished man.

It was now twenty years since Stokesbury's last fearful visit to his cousin. During the whole of this long period of time, Connor Kennedy had lived on, under the odium attached to his name, without any effort to win the world's better opinion. He had no friends, he had not even acquaintances, he gave no invitations, and he got none. He seldom stepped over the threshold of his door, even for the purposes of exercise; his domestic habits, so far as they could be known, were gloomy, ascetic, and very frugal. From this last circumstance—his expenditure being so far within his income—it was conjectured that, apart from the proceeds of his rent-roll, he had been annually acquiring personal property to a great amount.

Upon the evening of the day during which the occurrences last related had taken place, George Blundell sought admission at Connor Kennedy's door. His features, generally pale, were now pallid; much suffering was marked upon them, and his movements displayed that languor which proceeds from the mind, and which not the most painful bodily fatigue can occasion. He inquired if he could see Miss Kennedy, and, without receiving a direct reply, was shewn into the parlour. Here he continued for some time alone, now pacing about the apartment, now abruptly flinging himself into a chair, and now standing up again, to repeat his impatient tour round a table, which stood in the middle of the floor. The door at length opened—George Blundell started, in great agitation: a blush of eagerness overspread his face, but soon subsided. His brow darkened with displeasure, as Connor Kennedy crept in, peering around him, with his usual nervous and suspicious manner.

Connor Kennedy was tall and thin, pale and sharp featured. He stooped in the shoulders; and was characterised by a weak, half-shut, unsteady eye, and by an almost cringing step and air,

which, to many, indicated the mean stealthiness of his nature, and his capacity for committing the crimes laid to his charge. But, notwithstanding his present appearance, Connor Kennedy was known to have been very handsome in his youth.

George Blundell was not ignorant of the character attributed to the man now before him; and, in reference to the subject which engrossed his mind, had been prepared, from the moment he entered the parlour, to regard him with doubt and suspicion. Yet he bowed low to Mr. Kennedy. And Mr. Kennedy, with a drooping of the eye, seemingly most melancholy, and with his habitual, though languid smile, which had neither mirth nor happiness in its meaning, bowed more profoundly, even humbly, to his visiter.

"I wish you a very good evening, Mr. Blundell," he said, in a voice so low, though it was his common one, that it scarce rose above a whisper. "Pray take a chair, and be seated."

George Blundell silently obeyed. Connor Kennedy took another chair some distance from him, placed the palms of his hands on his knees, to support his drooping person, and fixed his eyes on the carpet.

There was an embarrassed pause, as if both felt unwilling to commence a disagreeable discussion. At length Mr. Kennedy spoke, but without glancing at the person he addressed.

"I believe, Mr. Blundell, your visit was not particularly meant for me—" Still he smiled, in his habitual half-imbecile way.

"In entering your house, sir," answered George Blundell—"I always feel, of course, the greatest pleasure when we meet. Yet, on this particular occasion, I cannot deny that my first object was to have the honour of speaking a few words with Miss Kennedy."

"Yes—ay—so I have learned. That is—the servant—that is—I mean—Miss Kennedy—Mr. Blundell—I am sure you will agree with me—one is sometimes obliged to discharge rather unpleasant duties. In fact, Mr. Blundell—you are yourself aware—that—"

Mr. Kennedy stopped speaking altogether.—George Blundell, in expectation of some further remark or explanation, remained as silent as he. There was another long and disagreeable pause. Mr. Kennedy at last resumed.

"But, Mr. Blundell, although duties are unpleasant—they must be fulfilled. It gives me the greatest pain—indeed, Mr. Blundell, it does pain me exceedingly—to be obliged to say—that—"

He stopped a second time, as if at a loss for words, or as if too

physically nervous to summon them up at will, for his purpose.

"What *do* you mean, Mr. Kennedy?" at length demanded George Blundell, in a sonorous voice, tired as well as disturbed by his host's hesitation. "Do you wish to tell me that Miss Kennedy will not see me? Is that, sir, the intelligence you want to communicate?"

"Exactly so, Mr. Blundell—exactly so—"

"I thought as much, Mr. Kennedy, when you first came into the room"—

"I am sorry, very sorry indeed, Mr. Blundell; as by the tone of your voice, I judge that her wish may prove disagreeable to you.—But, Mr. Blundell—"

"Well, sir, well?"—demanded George, waxing very impatient.

"That is—Mr. Blundell—I hope and trust that you will seeyourself—that Miss Annie—should—ought to come to this decision."

"What decision, Mr. Kennedy? tell me really what you mean?"

"Why—Mr. Blundell—you see—by my appearing here for her—that Miss Annie does not wish to see you herself."

"And why, Mr. Kennedy? why?" George's voice began to rise, and his eyes to flash more and more.

"I declare," said Mr. Kennedy, deprecatingly, "I have nothing very particular to say upon that point. I suppose—Miss Annie would have come to you, if—that is—if she really wanted to come—That is, Mr. Blundell, I mean to say—but—in the meantime, I beg leave to observe that—I have really nothing to say upon my own account, on the occasion."

"Pooh, sir! you know you represent Miss Kennedy here this evening."

"No indeed, Mr. Blundell—I cannot in this instance call myself—Miss Kennedy's representative. I beg you will understand that, very distinctly—if—Miss Kennedy acts at all expressively, in not seeing you, during this present visit of yours, it must be, I assure you, according to her own free choice. For I am but—a—a weakly man, unfit for contests of any kind."

"Then, sir, in what light am I to consider you, appearing as you do for Miss Kennedy, if you do not appear as her representative?"

"Mr. Blundell—in that case you will please to consider me as something in the light of the young lady's confidant."

"Sir—I can see only a difference of terms. Well, sir—apart from the business of this evening, I need not remind you that, as Miss Kennedy's *confidant*, you have always been quite aware of the understanding upon which you allowed my visits to your house?"

"Of course, Mr. Blundell—of course."

"Then, sir, upon what grounds do I so suddenly find my visits unwelcome?"

"I declare, Mr. Blundell, upon no grounds, that—to my own knowledge—I can sufficiently explain—But, you may be aware that—"

"Mr. Kennedy"—interrupted George, "There is but one word that can get us out of our present dilemma. She or you, or both together, have heard something to my disadvantage. Have you, or have you not?"

"Why, Mr. Blundell, I declare to you—"

"Have you, or have you not, sir?" repeated George, warmly.

"Oh, now, Mr. Blundell, pray do not agitate yourself. But—perhaps I may as well own to you that something of the kind, though I do not know exactly what, has been spoken of through the house."

"And what is it?" demanded George,

"Oh—Mr. Blundell—you know I before told you that I did not quite understand its nature."

"Very well, sir. But are you then astonished that I should want to come to the question with Miss Kennedy, if you choose to evade it? Mr. Kennedy," he continued, almost with an air of distraction, "you know, or you ought to know, that my preservation or destruction depends upon you!"

"Oh young gentleman, do not be so impetuous, I pray you. Impetuosity often leads to very dreadful consequences.

"I do not intend, Mr. Kennedy, to be impetuous—I should not wish to be so, for your sake. But I plainly see that some slander has done me wrong in this house; and here you come as the only person to meet me beneath its roof. Now, I only implore you, most anxiously and humbly, to gain me one moment's interview with Annie. Listen to me, sir, a little farther, before you answer. Age must ice my manner, and manacles must confine my limbs, before I could quietly rest one instant under Miss Kennedy's unfavourable opinion."

"I am a man of a weakly constitution, Mr. Blundell; violence always makes me nervous. Be patient, my good young gentleman, be patient."

"Mr. Kennedy—I have spent many hours, trying to temper down the very violence of which you speak. I am sure, I am at last patient, not violent. But if I am now denied the opportunity of vindicating myself in Miss Kennedy's opinion, against an unknown—that is, against an unadmitted charge, should you wonder,

sir, if my naturally hot temper, as you all call it, should cease to be patient?"

"Truly, truly, Mr. Blundell—I do not know how to act."

"Act, then, sir, as any man ought, who feels for the real unhappiness of another. Mr. Kennedy," he continued, becoming, perhaps, absurdly energetic, as he flung himself on one knee—"I humble myself to you, as I thought I never could to mortal man, and I implore you, sir, not to permit me to leave this house without the explanation I ask you for!"

Mr. Kennedy glanced upward one instant from the carpet, "Rise, Mr. Blundell, rise, I beseech you, sir———" He touched George's hands, and feeling their resistance to his appeal, again looked into the young man's face, now so intently, that George, from all his previous appreciation of the recluse's character, was struck with the expression of his glance.

"If your heart has not been hardened from your birth, sir, you will pity me," the boy urged.

"Oh, God forbid, that such a heart, or such a nature, were ever mine!" ejaculated Mr. Kennedy. "But resume your chair, Mr. Blundell, or we can never continue our conversation."—Half abashed George reseated himself. "Mr. Blundell, I do not bring any charges against you—understand me in that, I beg of you. But, candidly, do you think—and answer me candidly, I know you will,—that under present circumstances, Miss Kennedy ought to meet you?"

"Ought to meet me, sir? ought to meet me?—But all these words are idle. You of all men, Mr. Kennedy, should not—but no, I will not retort. I am hot-headed, sir, if you wish; forgive me. I will be quite candid with you.—I do suspect, notwithstanding all you say, that your opinion has influence over Miss Kennedy—and that you have advised her to deny herself to me this evening. Your very manner tells me so. And I can only again beg of you, as the most humble beggar could for a dole, to gain me ten minutes' conversation with her."

Mr. Kennedy rose from his chair, much agitated. He perceived that it was by a great effort that the young man curbed his impassioned feelings.

"Well then, I will go to Annie, Mr. Blundell, and—"

"You will use your influence in my favour? Say you will!" cried George once more, impetuously.

"Now, Mr. Blundell, you alarm me. I cannot tell why; but I am not a strong man, and you alarm me!"

"It is not my intention to do so, sir. I would rather again sup-

plicate your compassion in the most humiliating way—But tell me, sir, am I to see Annie? For"—George muttered, or rather growled, "I do not know how I may abide a refusal."

"Well, Mr. Blundell,—if my interference can avail, Annie will come to you. And so, a good evening—a very good evening to you, Mr. Blundell."

"You promise me, sir, do you not?"

"Why yes, if she come at my bidding. I do promise you"—And Mr. Kennedy timidly bowed himself out of the room.

This was palpably a constrained consent, whether against his conviction of what was right, or from some other cause, did not appear. After his agitated and almost trembling exit, George Blundell fixed his eye upon the door, which he had cautiously closed after him, and strained his ears, listening to every step and noise through the house. A full quarter of an hour elapsed, and still he was alone. At length the door briskly opened. An elderly woman who, as George was aware, filled a confidential situation in the Kennedy establishment, came courtesying towards him, evidently under the influence of terror. George Blundell frowned again, confronted her, and looked his enquiry.

"My young mistress bid me say to you, sir," hastily began the messenger of bad tidings,——and she, like her master, hesitated and stopped.

"Say what to me? that she will not come to me? Is that your message?"

"Mr. Connor Kennedy—'

"Go on, woman, what of him?"

"Why, sir, if Miss Annie came at all, sir, it wouldn't be to her own liking that she'd come."

"But she would come, only for Mr. Kennedy?"

"It isn't all on't, that, sir. But—"

"No matter," interrupted George Blundell, with livid passion, "I see there is equivocation on all hands. Tell Mr. Kennedy, and tell Miss Kennedy.—But, no; say nothing to them—They shall hear of it in another way." And the young man hurried, beside himself, out of the house.

CHAPTER IX.

THE morning after this occurrence, Annie Kennedy was formally summoned to a conference with the Mayor of Wind-gap, upon very important business, as the messenger informed her. At once descending, she found his Worship in the same parlour whence George Blundell had so hastily made his departure the evening before.

"A bright good morning to your handsome face, Miss Annie," he began, smiling very cordially.

"Good morning to you, my kind friend," answered Annie.

"Och! there's a cloud darkening your young brow," continued Maurteen; "and there's a blight stealing on your young heart. More's the pity! But never give grief the mastery over ye, my purty young crature. It would be a sore thing to see the May-bush withered in its blossoming."

Annie sighed involuntarily, but made no other answer.

"If it could be helped, Miss Annie, I'd go a good long way, afore I'd add anything to your throuble."

"Is it not of that evil Man at the Inch that you have come to speak to me, good Maurteen? I understood from you that we were to have some explanation about him?"

"In truth, then, it is to spake consarning him that I am here to the fore this morning, Miss Annie."

"Go on, then, at once, I beseech you," cried his listener anxiously.

"Don't give up to greater fear than there is a need for, my purty young lady. The biggest reason why I did not like to open all my mind to you, yestherday, was, because something I had to say was for your own self alone."

"Oh!" burst from the young girl, "I could not sleep last night, thinking of the horrid man! Every time I closed my eyes his repulsive image was before me."

"People is fools enough to say, Miss Annie," the old man said gravely, "though I don't think, in my own mind, there's much sense in the saying, that the young girl his look fixes on ought to be on her guard."

"What can you mean?" demanded Annie colouring, but speaking proudly; "you do not suppose he would dare to ——"

"In thruth I don't *Ma lanna*," resumed Maurteen, as she paused, answering her unformed meaning. "But, Miss Annie, 'tis an ould maxim with me, this many a year, to make provision against the

worst that can come round: when I go according to that maxim, my mind and myself, of course, along with the mind, then jogs on asy and quiet, ever and always. But it's my hope and belief that nothing like the worst, or half of the worst can come next, or nigh you. For, as I tould you, undher the roof of my counsel's house, on Wind-gap hill, I have the power to make that man, wicked as he is, and much as he frightens other people, give you up into my hands, even though you might be in his."

"Yes, I remember you said so," the girl said, more than ever disturbed by the gravity of his looks and words.

"Well, my purty Miss Annie, I could say no more till we were together, and nobody by. Now I'll say that more—d'ye see this paper, Miss Annie?" he continued, holding before her eyes something like a sealed letter.

"I certainly do see it, Maurteen."

"The writing that is inside of this I penned down with my own hands. There is no one in the world wide knows what the writing manes but myself only. And the writing is for you, Miss Annie."

"But you will tell me, Maurteen, what are the contents of the paper?" Annie asked anxiously.

"That you are not to know, my purty lady. But I'll tell you what use you're to make of it. Only, afore I do that, you must give me a vow;—aye, as binding a vow as if you swore upon the blessed book!"

"This is strange—most strange! What can be the nature of the vow you would impose?"

"You must vow to me before the good Heaven that loves you, and takes care of you, my purty child,—that no eye but your own shall ever see this paper. Even the outside of it, barring the time comes to put it to a right use. You must vow to me that you will never open it yourself, nor give it to any other to be opened, barring you give it to the only one I penned it down for. And you must vow to me, too, that if a time never comes to hand it over to That One, you will return it to me, safe and sound, as I will give it to you."

"And who is it for? To whom am I to deliver it? When am I to deliver it?"

"It is for the sthrange Man o' the Inch, my purty lady: no other eye but his is to see it, outside or inside: no hand but his is to touch it, except your own. And you are never to deliver it to him until you're alone with him, against your will, in fear and trembling of him; and when it's come to the last moment with you, and when

no other door is left open for you. It's *then* you are to deliver it to him, with mannerly compliments from Maurteen Maher, the Mayor of Wind-gap."

"Oh, Maurteen! how you confound and terrify me! Is it indeed possible that you can calculate such a situation for me?"

"The Lord above keep you far from it!" answered Maurteen. "In truth, no, Miss Annie, I don't talk of it at all as a thing that's sartain sure to happen; and you'd obleege me by not givin' yourself distress by taking me up in a mistake. But I tould you my maxim,—'fore-warned, fore-armed.' Be ready for an evil day, and an evil day will most likely keep from you. So, take the paper—it won't hurt or harm you; it won't bite, or bruise, or burn you. And there's another maxim I go by,—that as long as there's a purse in the chest, the owner of it needn't go without his dinner, barrin' he's mighty fanciful entirely."

"Well, then, give me the paper."

"Give *me* the vow first, my purty hony."

"The vow! You must repeat it for me anew, if you really desire me to take it."

"Well, and it won't take much breath or time to put it into your head again." And Maurteen, in a most impressive tone, repeated the terms of the proposed engagement.

"And now put your little white hand over the good little heart that's beating in your body, and promise me, as you're God's own child, and hope to find favour in his sight, that you will observe every word of that vow."

Annie Kennedy performed the action, and gave as impressively, the solemn promise required of her.

"Here, then, Miss Annie, take the paper into your keeping at last: remember, of all things, that it comes back to my hand, if the time never falls out for giving it as 'tis directed. Cast your eye over the writin' on the outside."

Annie eagerly glanced at the superscription on the rudely-folded and clumsily-sealed packet, hoping to learn the name, at least, of a person so much dreaded. But she only read, to "The sthrange Man of the Inch," inscribed on the important document, in very stiff and formal characters.

"Hide it, Miss Annie; hide it up safe, but keep it about you. Who knows but it may be worth more nor a sack of goold to you, if the need comes to part with it!"

"Heaven defend me!" cried the girl, still gazing on the strange credentials in her favour. "It is strange, even alarming, that a

man of sense, like you, Maurteen Maher, should really think such precaution necessary on my behalf."

"There *is* an ounce, or so, of sense in our head, we believe, according to what the neighbours say. Have a reliance on me, my child; remember what I have done for Peggy Carroll, and 'twill go hard if I don't do more for your sake. Depend upon it, I'll keep my little *Birdeen* flyin' to and fro, for the bare life; and I'll twist the neck of him—and, by coorse, the head follows the neck—if he doesn't do his duty by you and by me. When your affairs ought to keep me wakin', there will be no sleep on my eyes any how."

Still much puzzled and alarmed, Annie renewed her expressions of thanks to his mysterious Mayorship.

"Well," continued Maurteen, rubbing down his knee with his hand; "now that we have that matther settled, sure there's another little thing I want to be spaking about. It wasn't intirely on the head o' the paper and the sthrange man that I made so bould as to sit down all alone wid you, this morning."

"I know you are my friend, Maurteen, and I will attend carefully to whatever you have to say to me."

"Listen, then, a-gra. The evening o' yestherday was a very fine evening, about Wind-gap. The smell o' the new hay would have refreshed your heart, young and fresh as it is, already, not to say as if it was as ould as mine; there wasn't a breath of wind stirring the laves upon the threes; and the sun, when he was setting, made the sky, to the west, look as rosy as the blooming on your own soft cheek. Well, when I am a-walking down by the river side on such an evening as that was, with my fishing-rod in my hand, I have no envy to the greatest king that ever sat upon a throne. Of a surety, there isn't over much care to my lot—I give thanks for the same; but, whenever care or throuble does come to me, it goes away, somehow, from my side, as I saunther along by the banks of the paceful wather. And it's a thruth, Miss Annie, take it from my lips, that a sthroll along that grassy bank, about the hour o' the sunset, will do more than make a sorrowful heart happy; it will make a happy one happier—ay, and still more than that, 'twill smoothen the wrinkle on the angry man's brow, and it will stale out of the breast of the worldly man, in a long sigh, his envy, or his ill-will to his neighbour.

"Well, again, my child; we had a fine soft summer's evening, the last evening that's gone by. There were children laughing out loud and playing about on the hill side, and there were ould people a-sitting down to rest themselves; and they looked for all the world

as if the evening of their life was the evening that the heavens sent shining and smiling all around them in pace, and in quiet, and in pleasure. But there was one man, Miss Annie—he was a young man, into the bargain—and he ought to have been singing with the birds, and jumping through the grass, like the grasshoppers. But he hurried along as if he was runnin' from himself; he was heedless of what was givin' the heart's joy to all others, and his brow was as dark as if a tempest had been peltin' on it. When I looked upon him, I thought he was the more and more angry, because the sunny sky did not look miserable, like himself. Can you give a guess, Miss Annie Kennedy, who that young man was?"

"Indeed I—how could I know?" the girl blushed and stammered.

"Well, I won't ask of you to make the guess, my purty lady. I'll tell you myself. That young man was Masther George Blundell. I went along in his steps when he thought no eye was on him. He flung himself down on the grass; he threw out his arms from him, and he moaned, and he sobbed so pitifully that it would put affliction on your young heart to listen to him. And afther I watched him some time, he bounced upon his feet, and he looked with an evil eye upon the deep wather. There was a sickness came over me, my child, for I guessed his meaning."

"My God!" his listener cried, starting up with clasped hands, and looking more pale and terrified than ever she had done through fear of the strange Man of the Inch.

Maurteen did not immediately continue: at length he condescended to say—"No, Miss Annie—no. He did not make away with himself that time, praises be given. I went up to him, and I spoke to him. At the first he was angered against me; he commanded me to continue on my way. He said he knew nothing about me, and that he wanted to know nothing about me, and that he liked to be left alone. But I didn't quit him. I spoke softly to him, with a little sense, too, may be. Indeed, and in thruth, I spoke to him like one who had a feeling for him, for I had the feeling for him. And so we sat down at last, on the soft sunny bank; and he took my two ould, hard, withered hands in his: and he tould me his griefs, and then he cried like a foolish little child, and I b'lieve I nearly cried too, like a more foolish and bigger one. Just to keep him company, I suppose."

"Oh, dear, good Maurteen, God bless you!" murmured the girl, with a long breath of relief.

"Miss Annie, there is a doom before that poor boy; and he must meet it, and soon. But if he gets bravely through it, there's hap-

piness in store for him at last,—and for some one else with him into the bargain."

"A doom, Maurteen? What doom?"

"Och! I said what was wrong—but the word came from my mouth without thinking. I can't tell any more, only this. He was near his doom yestherday evening. But the Heavens forbid that his death should be laid to you, Mavourneen!"

"His death! his death, laid to me?"

"Masther Blundell is a youth that has hot blood round his heart, Miss Annie. With some people the grief that falls on them falls like the spring shower, and they're the better for it when it has passed away: but this isn't the way with our poor Masther George. The grief comes to him like a winter tempest. His love is a scorching fire; and I'm thinking that if ever his hatred falls on any one, 'twill be a witherin' blast. Miss Annie, while we were sitting together by the river side, he made acknowledgment to me, that when I came up, his thought was tempting him to take one good jump into it: he was disthracted, like, because you refused to see him, and to listen to him. There was grief upon him, before he knocked at your dour, yestherday evenin', but when your word turned him away from it, it grew too much intirely for his nature to bear, although another body might be able to submit like a Christhin."

"But, Maurteen, I think I—I was right in refusing to see him yesterday evening."

"I won't say all out, that you did the wrong thing, Miss Annie, because all looks black against him. Only, that is the very rason why your anger came the hotter and the heavier on his heart." Annie winced. "It is a great misfortnne when the world turns against a man. But when our nearest and dearest turn with the world, och! my purty child, that's the heart-scalding, in downright good arnest."

"Oh! Maurteen," Annie asked, unconsciously wrought upon by Maurteen's plausible pleadings, "are you sure, quite sure, that none of the dreadful idea of yesterday evening remain in his mind?"

"I am, my purty young lady. He promised me, poor boy, that he'd pluck it up by the roots, and throw it from him—and I have a reliance on any promise out of George Blundell's lips. But I made him a promise, in return, howsomever. I promised him that I'd gain your lave and licence for him to come to you, all alone, and to sit with you, all alone—that he may tell you something. And when I gave him my hand in pledge that I'd bring this about, he wanted to go down upon his knees to thank me, and to pray for

me. In truth, I was ashamed to behould a gentleman like him goin' to demean himself before the likes o' me."

"But, Maurteen," Annie said, with heightened color, now shaking off in a degree the effects of his Worship's oratory, "it is my opinion that you might have first consulted me, as a party slightly concerned, before you gave that promise and that pledge, so very confidently."

"Not a bit, my darlin' young lady—I knew well that you'd have the pity, if nothing else, in your heart for him this morning; and that you'd give him the time and the place to say whatever he can in his own defence, in your hearing. I knew you used to be just in your mind, as well as good in your nature—and you owed me allegiance, more betoken, as the Mayor o' Wind-gap. For though you are now livin' in the bailiwick of that poor soft-headed cratur, in the next sthreet, you passed the airliest and some of the happiest of your days undher my rule, when you were fosther-child to Juff Carroll's good woman, that's now no more, and fosther-sister into the bargain, to little Peggy Carroll, the purtiest and the best girl I govern over, except yourself, Miss Annie, and that I saved for you only the day afore yestherday, because she let me take my own way. The same that I ask you to let me do, this present moment."

"Well, Mr. Mayor," answered Annie, involuntarily smiling at this transcendently ingenious speech—"I yield you my allegiance. But still I am convinced that I ought not, under present circumstances, to hold intercourse with Mr. George Blundell. Apart from the undefended charges against him, he has given me new cause for displeasure and estrangement. Yesterday evening, here in this very parlour, he insulted my guardian, Mr. Kennedy."

"My darlin', purty young crature, the scalded heart makes a fool of the poor young head. When you refused to come down to him, the boy did not know what he was sayin' or doin'. Moreover, how do you know but what he wants to say to you, quite alone, between yourselves, may have something to do with them charges you spake of?"

"It would be wrong—very wrong to see him," deliberated Annie.

And what has been predicated of the woman who deliberates? Maurteen Maher knew, though he had never read the poet's line. And when he saw that he had thus virtually gained his point, he did not go on arguing after convincing. He did not enter into the

question of the propriety or impropriety of granting the boon he solicited, he only appealed to her compassion, representing the consequences likely to ensue should she persist in her refusal. Finally, he obtained her full consent to a private interview with George Blundell; and left the house to communicate his tidings to his protegé, with as brisk a step, and in as high spirits, as if he had succeeded in gaining, after a hard battle, some great personal favour for himself.

Declare, oh Rochefaucauld! how much, or how little of poor old Maurteen Maher's vanity in his diplomatic talents, mingled, on this occasion, with his feelings of justice and of benevolence.

CHAPTER X.

It is evident that the circumstances under which the young people once again saw each other alone, were embarrassing. Annie felt it to be her duty distinctly and unequivocally to dismiss George Blundell. For, she said to herself, the associate of a desperate libertine, nay, the partaker of his guilt, ought not for an instant to continue to be to her even as an acquaintance. Yet, the poor girl's heart sickened at this conviction; and final separation did not promise a less severe pang, because it became necessary to inflict it on herself.

She was seated at a small work-table, with an open book upon it, when George Blundell entered the room—the same, by the way, in which Mr. Kennedy had given him an audience. In the very doorway, the young man paused, and looked earnestly at her. Their eyes met. Annie had never seen her lover's face under the expression of every day merriment: she had beheld it, indeed, subdued into the gentle tenderness which her smiles could always induce; and, when the fulness of joy glowed in every feature she had called it in the romance of her girlish mind more radiant than the summer sunshine. Once before this day, she had looked upon it clouded with suffering. The deep-seated agony now expressed by George Blundell's countenance shocked her. As he advanced, she trembled, and was unable to rise from her chair, in the formal, yet easy, manner which she had planned.

To her fancy, George Blundell's words came in slow and melan

choly, yet not inharmonious, cadences on her ear, like the music of a dirge.

"I perceive," he said, "that my presence is painful to you: I must therefore be the more grateful for the charity shewn me, in this permission to wait on you. However, Annie, as it is probably the last time I shall so afflict you, I crave your indulgent hearing to what I have now to say. You reproach me with"—

"Mr. Blundell, it is not I who reproach you; nor is it my intention to do so even now. But"—she hesitated.

"What would you say? go on, dearest girl—But I forget—I am too bold in addressing you as familiarly as once you allowed me to do—is this not what that look meant? I did not intend it, however, I cannot help it. There would be something so hopeless in the formal sound of your name, that my tongue even now refuses to utter it. But, pardon me.—You stopped short in what you wished to say."

"Mr. Blundell"—it is but fair to Annie to say, that it was not without outward faltering, and a sore inward pang, that she thus proved that *she* could rise above the weakness which had prompted her lover's last speech—"can you prove—*fully prove* your innocence of the things laid to your charge?"

"Annie Kennedy, I cannot," he answered slowly and with quivering lips. "I can but make assertions to you."

"Then, Sir,—you will—will yourself admit the necessity of an immediate and—and final—final separation between us."

There was a pause during which each strove hard for self-command. Then George Blundell spoke.

"I do not blame you, Annie," he said; "far from it. I only blame my own fate, when I agree in the justice of the wretched sentence you pass upon me;—when I myself declare that it is fit and natural you should draw back from me."

Now, although Annie had quite resolved to be stern and unflinching in her decree, it it singular enough that this ready acquiescence in it did not fail to pique her. As a matter of womanly decorum, our gentle Annie determined upon dismissing her lover for ever. But her pride, and perhaps her vanity, were wounded at the thought that he allowed her manacles to drop too willingly from his hands. Which, by the way, did not shew that her own fetters were as loose as she might have chosen to imagine them.

"Well, sir"—had the lover been less wretched he could not have failed to notice the very evident pique of tone and manner—and, perchance, to have drawn hopeful inferences therefrom—"we have

quickly come to an understanding. What necessity is there for a prolonged conference on the subject?"

And she rose from her seat with chilling dignity. George made a gesture of entreaty. "Annie, dear Annie," he cried, even with passion. "Do not so suddenly turn from me. Permit me to fulfil the purpose for which I came here. I sought this meeting with one particular object in view. Pray, pray sit down again—Or—do you indeed refuse me an opportunity for uttering a last word to you?"

"Well, Sir;—for that alone—" And spite of George's deprecating looks and words, Annie resumed her judgment-seat with the severe dignity of a young "second Daniel."

"I must begin by saying, that I knew I never could be worthy of your love—"

"You did, Mr. Blundell?" pettishly. "Then can I feel complimented that you should have attempted—particularly since recent occurrences—to call forth my affection?"

"When I sought your love, Annie, there was no stain upon me—I could therefore not have drawn back on that account. God knows if that be true. Now, I repeat, you act but naturally in receding from me. But, Annie, although I admit the justice of my rejection, do not mistake my admission. I shall experience no self-reproach in the agony to which for my life it must doom me. I do not ask you to believe me now, but I tell you—and one day you shall know the truth of my words—Personally, I have done nothing to merit your dismissal—your contempt. Annie, spite of your cold words and looks I cannot,—cannot believe that in your heart you, even now, think me the villain the world would represent me to be."

"Mr. Blundell," Annie said, in a troubled, and by no means steady tone, "you have said you could give me nothing but assertions. *Do* you—can you, before God—assert yourself to be innocent of,—so I must call them,—the crimes you are accused of?"

"Innocent! before God, innocent, beloved Annie, innocent!" he exclaimed passionately.

"Then, why are you the companion of that degraded man? Why have I seen you in his company? Why have I heard such words pass between you? You know what I mean—George, Mr. Blundell, answer me," cried the girl in rising hope.

"Annie," he replied, "you yourself have accused me, and I have been publicly accused, in this town, of having been a party to the

abduction of your foster-sister. So help me Heaven! I am as guiltless of that charge as yourself can be. As to the words you overheard, I was certainly presumptuous enough to speak of you, but, you must admit, without levity; without—".

"But you spoke of me to that man! Why make me or my name an affair of his? How can you be connected with him, closely connected, and still expect to be known to me? Mr. Blundell, the recollection of that alone should be sufficient to call on me to end this interview."

"All that will be understood, Annie, when you shall have heard a plain story; the story I came here to tell."

"You have taken some time to introduce it, Sir," she remarked, doubtless, by her severity reconciling herself to the continuance of the interview.

"Forgive me, Annie; I will delay no longer what I have to tell—what, I dare hope, will be my vindication in your eyes.—Listen then: I will be brief as may be.

"In my tenth year, I recollect myself living in a peasant's cottage. I was brought up with the children of the family, and after the same manner in which they were, except that my infancy and childhood were more embittered then theirs. It was not concealed from me that I had no real claim upon their care. Before I was ten years old even, I knew that I was an alien to the people about me, and constantly I sought to know how I had come amongst them. At first they only laughed at my inquiries, or beat me for making them; until, at length, when I had possibly tormented them beyond patience, they informed me that I was a child of whom my parents were ashamed, and whom they brought up through charity. In fact, Annie, I was considered an incumbrance, even in that lowly house: worse, they branded me with a disgraceful name. I was ill-treated by the old; I was scorned by the young. My nature was growing morose, my temper sour, often savage. My childish days were spent in wretchedness; never since, have I, been able wholly to free my mind of the premature gloom and bitterness imparted to it by those early scenes.

"One lad only, in my neighbourhood, treated me with kindness. I have often since thought that the heart within me must have become dead, in a kind of moral petrifaction, but that it expanded to him, in return for his gentleness to me. Upon one occasion, when some four or five other boys were at play, and while I looked on, as was my custom, without attempting, or indeed wishing to play with them, my only friend, was attacked, upon some misunder-

standing, by a lad stronger and older than himself. I took his quarrel upon me; my antagonist was my physical superior also in every way, but I had not time to count odds. Before that day, I had scarce ever stood up on my own account against an insult, because the consciousness of my humiliating position weighed me down like lead. But," continued the young man, interrupting himself, anxiously, "I perhaps fatigue you, Annie?"

"No, no, my no means! Pray go on," she said, with eagerness.

"Well, I became the conqueror on this occasion, though sorely bruised and battered: the little fellow for whom I had fought, nursed me until my wounds were cured. The other boys envied me my success, and, still retaining their malevolent uncharitableness against me, sought to provoke me into fresh quarrels. My blood got up, and I one day offered to encounter them, one by one; but, (out of virtuous detestation, I suppose,) they fell upon me, nearly all together, and I could only defend myself as well as I was able, against their united blows.

"During this unequal contest, I was unconscious that a stranger had been looking on, an unbiassed witness of the tyranny practised upon me, and of my vain efforts to resist it. That stranger, to my astonishment, suddenly became my protector, judiciously using his cane to disencumber me of my cowardly assailants.

"When they had retired, and that we were alone, he inquired my birth and parentage. At first, I would not reply to him at all: gradually he drew reluctant and tearful, though true, answers from me. At my statement, I saw him start and frown: then he took my hand, and asked me to lead him to the house where I resided. I did so;—we entered the mean abode, I was in rags, and otherwise very badly taken care of. I heard my mysterious protector disputing angrily with the proprietor of my churlish place of refuge. I heard my name mentioned, and understood that I was the subject of their debate. Finally, the stranger called me—his son—his lawful son, he said I was! Oh, Annie! when I heard this, I cannot tell you how my young heart exulted! Well do I remember the boyish assumption of lofty demeanour which I put forward, after I had summoned sufficient courage to call *him* father. Little show of fatherly kindness did he then afford me, but his mere countenancing the poor despised boy was sufficient to arouse all the dormant tenderness of my nature for him. When he told me that his name was Blundell, and that I must forget that by which I had hitherto been called, (the name of the family with whom I had been living,) and assume his, I thought myself absolutely ennobled.

"My father immediately had me conveyed into a neighbouring village, and there he clothed me well, and fed me daintily. At his departure, which shortly after occurred, he placed me at a respectable school: two years afterwards, in my twelfth year, I was removed, at his command, though he did not then come back to me, to the college of this town. At our first meeting, he had told me he was a merchant, possessing great wealth in a foreign country; that he had left Ireland, while yet young, in consequence of my mother's death; that he had no child but me; and that I was to be the sole inheritor of a large fortune. I never questioned the truth of this story; and the liberal supplies of money regularly remitted to me, in his name, seemed fully to prove it.

"For many years I did not again behold my Father; not, in fact, till about three months ago. Then I received a message to attend him, at a house which he had just taken, in the neighbourhood of this city. Now, Annie, do you begin to pity me?"

"Are you at liberty to declare who he is?" she asked, deathly pale.

"I will declare it to *you*, dear girl, at any risk," answered George Blundell, sorrowfully, while big tears dropped from his eyes—"'The strange Man of the Inch,' is my Father."

"Dear George! forgive me all I have said to pain you—my coldness, my injustice, my cruelty! I do—I do, indeed, pity you," cried Annie, impulsively extending her hand, her own eyes brimful of penitent tears.

"God bless you, my darling!" said her lover, as he gratefully touched her hand with his lips. "On this wretched fact, then, do I rest my vindication against the foul calumnies cast upon me."

"I see—I understand it all, dear George."

"You overheard us speaking together in the lane, near his house. I was conscious that you must have known of the imputations in question; and I was praying of him to permit me to confide to you the secret of my birth, in order that you might understand why I had been discovered in his company at the bonfire. He sternly and threateningly repelled my prayer. I now make the disclosure, in the teeth of his commands; because it is of less consequence to me to inherit his wealth, did he possess the produce of all the mines hid in the bowels of this round world, than, for one single day, to sink in your estimation. And I sought a private interview with you, because I durst not tell my secret to any other person."

"He insists, then, that your relationship shall remain unknown?"

"He does. Three months ago, when for the second time in my life I met him, we had not been many minutes together before he gave me to understand as much. He added, that the fact of even ordinary intimacy between us must be hidden from the world; and that, whenever we saw each other, it must be without witnesses, or else personally disguised."

"Did you ask his reasons for so unaccountable a mystery?"

"I did,—over and over—in vain. I found him a rough, peremptory man. He said the measure was necessary; was his will and pleasure, and that he should be obeyed. That was all. Nor did he fail to remind me, that even for my very bread I was at his mercy, and that disobedience on my part, and abandonment on his, should be cause and consequence."

There is self-evidence in the accents of truth, which is its guarantee against doubt and disbelief in the hearts of those to whom it addresses itself. Annie Kennedy fully credited the story she had heard: her looks and manner towards the narrator were now kind and trustful as ever.

"Annie, consider the situation in which I am placed," the young man continued. "Although a stern and a dictatorial Father, he has been a kind and liberal one to me, ever since the moment he rescued me from poverty and degradation. Exclusive of my gratitude to him for having given me a station in the world, with education, and means to support it, it is my creed, my religious, conscientious creed, that, except in the commission of an evil act, we are bound to yield honour and obedience—no matter what may be his private character,—to a parent. With you, indeed, Annie, I break the commands laid upon me, in the present instance, because I feel, that the loss of your esteem were to me a fearful incentive to—bear with me, dear one,—to self-destruction. But you will guard my secret; it is unnecessary for me to ask that you will—"

"I will assuredly guard it, George," she said, "since your interests demand it."

"Putting completely out of view all worldly interests," he went on, "I am bound to keep my Father's secret, because he has commanded me to do so—do you not judge so, Annie?"

"I should think so," she replied, though with a little hesitation. "Yet in what fearful difficulties does it involve you!"

"I must be content to bear even infamy, while I do my duty," he said in low, but determined tones.

"'Tis all very strange, and very unfortunate, dear George," the

girl said musingly. "May I ask you one question? Do you think that public report wrongs your Father."

"I have ventured to speak with him on the subject, repugnant as it was to my feelings to do so. He says he is not guilty of the things laid to his charge: he stormed and raved at me for supposing the contrary to be the case. He adds, that his necessarily mysterious mode of life has subjected him to the gossip of the censorious and foolish vulgar, and that the misdeeds of others are undeservedly heaped upon him."

"Do you—can you believe him?" questioned Annie, with hesitation.

"Oh! that I could answer you I did! Alas! facts tending to disprove his words have come to my knowledge. Deep in my bosom, I—pity me, Annie—I feel a horrid misgiving that report speaks truly of him. That my father, *my father*, is a man of evil ways. And, taking this to be the fact,—supposing it for an instant to be the fact—think, dearest, think how I am situated. That I must either submit to be considered as the accomplice of a man who, in this little quarter of the world, is openly called a desperado—that I must do this, not admitting the connection of Father and Son between us;—or, admitting it, I must abandon him, and say to the world, 'You are right! this is the bravo and the evil man. To save myself from social disgrace, I, his son, must cast him off!'" Again the young man became deeply affected, and was silent.

"Dear George," Annie repeated softly, while she laid her little hand upon his. He pressed it with fondness.

"And what should I gain even by this last course? what should even you gain, darling, supposing my lot and yours to go hand in hind, after it? I, nothing but the base reputation of being the son of a depraved and detested individual; you, nothing but the sharing of that reputation—if indeed I could ask you to share it. But I am here," his voice trembled, "to tell you that I will not ask you to encounter it. To tell you, dear one, that George Blundell's heart will eat itself away, in hopeless agony, before he asks you to change for the worse, your present position of honour, and of virtue."

"Oh, George!—dear George!" sobbed the girl. He went on.

"No—dearest—I would not afford to the world, even at the risk of all my own worldly happiness, the opportunity to point a finger against you. Yet, you see that to which side soever I turn, that world has the power, and indeed, according to its own laws, the right to

scorn me. Oh, Annie, Annie! I have been foolishly proud of my own good name. I have exulted in the consciousness of possessing, from the hand of God, a mind stored with many treasures. I have idolized the lovely forms of nature, and the lovelier features of virtue, as displayed before me by the hand of that God. I have turned with loathing from the repulsive front of vice—To be at last, without fault of mine, levelled with the vicious;—to be classed with those minds which are made up but of a mass of sluggish matter, or of matter of a worse kind;—to be classed with those who can laugh when they commit sin or outrage—and, who by the indulgence of habits common to them and to the senseless brute, debase themselves below the level of the brute creation. This—this is affliction, indeed!"

"It is, in truth, a bitter trial, dear George," she said, in a voice of deep commiseration. "Yet, George," she went on timidly, after a pause—"do you not think that you at present express yourself as if the mere Name of Virtue, were of equal importance with Virtue itself? Do you not, in the present instance, unnecessarily set as high a value upon the Shadow as upon the Substance?"

"You speak to me, dear love," the young man answered with tender admiration, "as you have ever, though heretofore unconsciously done, like a soothing, yet a correcting angel. I do not know what to say further, but the pure lesson shall not be lost upon me. I want, Annie, to recur to one thing that I glanced at, when we first began this conversation. You remember I told you that from the very commencement of our acquaintance, I felt I never could be worthy of your affection. Darling, that was true, though, thank God! not in the sense in which it first appeared to you. But there was about you a something of the spiritualized purity of nature, of goodness, of undefiledness, which impressed me like the beauty of a gentle day in spring—filling me with love, and admiration, and delight,—but, like the beauty of the spring, filling me also with a deep, almost a mournful sense of my own inequality. I cannot clearly express what I mean, but your face tells me, through its modest blushes, that you have divined what I would fain express—not, believe me, through the poor and unworthy wish to flatter you; but to explain to you the meaning of those words that you resented. Therefore was it that I feared I could never obtain your love. And when I did obtain it! Oh, my God! what a change came over me!—what a Heaven of earthly happiness! Even now I may still continue to believe that you love me; though, as I have said, I *must*, for your own dear sake, reject that love, even though you were about to renew

its promise to me. You must not,"Annie, pass along the streets of this town, and encounter any who could say of you, 'That is the wife of the son of a villain.' Annie, I do not yet understand my father: in this avowal, perhaps, exists the full force of my present despair. For disreputable as we all know him to be, here, in this neighbourhood, I have deeper fears of him. I have fears that extend beyond this place; nay, beyond our native country. I have fears of him, that I dare not express even to myself! Therefore, Annie, I repeat, and I repeat it more decidedly than ever," he said it with a broken, sobbing voice, poor boy! "from this moment you can have nothing to do with me—you *must* have nothing to do with me. Except the affording me your full belief in my innocence, and in all the facts I have submitted to you; and—and your full pity for my future lot—when I shall be for ever separated from you."

George Blundell, who had risen to his feet, during the latter part of his speech, here sank back upon his chair, and covering his face in his hands groaned aloud.

Annie's tears had fallen fast and heavy while he was speaking: now she no longer wept. She gazed upon her lover with enthusiastic admiration—admiration of his sentiments, of his principles, and we must confess, of the unconsciously graceful energy of his expression, as well as of the alternate flashing and sinking of his dark eyes. Even after he had ceased to speak, she seemed to listen to him. Presently, however, she dropped her forehead upon her hand, and half turned from him, a cloud of black, glossy ringlets drooping and veiling her countenance. The young pair were for some time silent. At length Annie raised her head; with an impulsive gesture she tossed her hair backwards from her blushing, but eager face, and began to speak, at first in a tremulous voice, then firmly, and eventually with intense pathos.

"George"—she said, and the young man raised his head and bent eagerly towards her—"I give full belief and credit to every word that you have spoken in your vindication—"

"May God bless you, Annie, I knew you would!"

"I—I think it necessary to state my full belief, as a kind of preface to what I am about to say. I have endeavoured to reflect steadily, and as you have been so frank with me, I mean to speak frankly to you. Dear George—you sought my love—I gave it to you. When I did so, no thought of mine was influenced by worldly considerations. Your love for me has caused you to overrate in many ways a simple girl like me;—but in my love I will say you had a gift as true, as warm, and as pure as ever a young

girl gave to a man, while, for the first time, yielding up her heart's affections. I am not ashamed to say, nor do I fear to flatter you, when I declare that I bestowed that love upon virtue; upon high-mindedness; upon talent; upon genius. To say nothing of personal recommendation, or of your most sincere attachment to me. Nay, hear me out, George Blundell: neither do *I* speak to flatter. Nothing could have changed me towards you, except a discovery of your being less worthy than I supposed you in my deep-trusting partiality. And, upon this day I discover nothing that can lower my first estimate of you—on the contrary. Therefore, dear George, after all you have said, I love you, and shall ever love you and you only. I shall never fall away from you, George Blundell. No, no"—she went on, drawing back a little, as George, in his joy, would have clasped her in his arms—"let me calmly finish what I have to say. I have now candidly told you the opinions of my mind, and the feelings of my heart: if they are indeed welcome to you, remember them and accept them. But I cannot disguise from myself, meantime, that a woman has other duties than those of love to perform. I must not too hastify sink myself in the world's esteem:—so far, my poor George, I agree with you, though you have manfully anticipated me. No; you are right—no—we must not be hasty. While the present cloud hangs over you, we must cease to be even private acquaintances. But have faith in your Annie. I have loved you for your own qualities: could I now change towards you, because unmerited misfortune has placed you in questionable circumstances? I will love none other but you; I will wed none other but you. Brighter days must surely beam on us at last. I cannot, will not, believe but that you will soon become enabled to reassert yourself in your own true character. But if"—she added, almost with solemnity—"if time does *not* stand your friend; if your life continues to be thus undeservedly clouded, then, George Blundell, come to me again, and again take me to be for ever your own true wife!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE house at the Inch, the scene of the tragedy, with which we are gradually becoming more particularly acquainted, was an old family

mansion, built in the graceless style of architecture pretty generally adopted in Ireland in the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. It was a square structure, of which each side terminated in a pointed and towering gable, while each gable was surmounted by a formidable chimney. At that side, where the stone-framed, massive hall-door gave entrance to the dwelling, the windows had been placed with some degree of uniform arrangement: elsewhere they were up and down, here and there, great and small;—as if, after the first construction of the house, whim or necessity, rather than pre-concerted design, had dictated their relative positions. The walls were very massive, and all the principal rooms wainscoted.

Into the largest room, on the second story of this house, we now enter, as visiters to its present notorious proprietor.

The furniture is old, lumbering, and much decayed. The walls and floor of the apartment itself have been but indifferently reclaimed from a former state of almost dilapidation. Large wax tapers, in a superb silver candelabra, burn on a carved table in the centre, but their soft light reveals on every side the reign of discomfort, arising from a mixture of luxury and unfitness, of ornament and blemish, nay, even of the want of common attention to order, visible throughout the room and its belongings.

"The strange Man of the Inch" sat alone at the massive carved table, A half drained silver-gilt goblet, richly chased, was before him. The bottle from which he had filled it, and another, which he had previously emptied, were to his hand; while a common delft mug, with a handle near the neck—one of those called a "grey beard"—stood in the middle of the board.

An embroidered purple velvet cap, sat, not inelegantly, upon his head. He was regaling himself with a gigantic pipe, which, after many convolutions, rested on the floor at his feet; it was indeed a luxury of exotic fashion, and formed in the eyes of his neighbours, one of the objects which, taken as appendages to him, challenged curiosity and inquiry, if not fears. Ever and anon, while he puffed from his curving lip the vapour of perfumed tobacco, his brow would knit closely over his flashing eye, as though, even in solitude, it would hide and concentrate its meaning.

The door of the apartment slowly, and, it might be said, subserviently opened. "The strange Man" turned towards it his keen, searching eye. A tall and bulky fellow, enveloped in a large, loose wrapper of blue frieze, which disguised his person, stood beyond the threshold.

"So, Bourke!—is that you?—Advance;" said the "strange Man," in sonorous and not unmusical tones.

His clumsy visiter, plodding forward with a heavy step, removed his slouched hat from his bushy brow.

"Sit you down, sit you down, Bourke," continued the "strange Man," pointing to a seat somewhat apart from the table;—"Sit down, and make love to 'grey beard.'"

"*Dhar-a-loursa!* * an' who'll say it isn't the mouth-wather that hasn't its match?"—the man remarked, after he had applied the mug to his lips, and gulped a sufficient quantity of its contents. "I'll let out the thruth. The love an' the likin' that I have for it *bates Bannachar.*" †—And, to exemplify his statement, he once more pressed his lips to the lips of the "grey beard." Then he rested the vessel on the table, embracing it with his great hands, as if he claimed it as his own, smacking his mouth and grinning hideously.

The "strange Man" smoked on, without a change of countenance, as if abstracted or indifferent, or perhaps contemptuous, though without outward expression of such feeling. Bourke fixed his large grey eyes upon him, and, by degrees, also waxed serious. There was a silence for some time. At length the "strange Man's" glance suddenly encountered that of the other, and in a loud, sharp voice, while he struck his foot upon the floor, he as suddenly demanded—"Bourke! there is a traitor among ye?"

"By the gor," answered the fellow, collectedly, although at first he had been rather startled—"not to my knowin', or to the knowledge of me, masther."

"Not to your knowing!—Are you not certain?—positively certain, one way or the other?"

"I'll take book-oath on it,—an' may this *lauchy* ‡ liquor be my pison, afore I close my eye, if I'm tellin' you a word of a lie, at the prasent time."

"And you have not discovered who pirated the girl from the summer-house, in the garden, where she had been so safely stowed away?"

"No, masther; we lost all marks and tokens of her in the town. But wait a bit, wait a bit; all is not lost that's in danger. What a body can't see a good way off to-day, because there's bad weather between a body and it, a body may be able to see to-morrow, when the sun takes away the clouds, and lets a body's eyes do their naathral business."

"Bourke—there is some one on the watch, that we don't count among ship's crew. There is some stranger, I tell you, knows more

* An imprecation. † Goes beyond expression.

‡ Lovely, pleasing, generous.

of our tacks than he ought to know. I ask you again, sirrah,—and now have a care of your answer—Is there, or is there not, a skulking traitor amongst you?"

"*Dhar-a-loursa*—A thraitor!—What business would such a one have to be rubbin' to us?—Would he see the sun two mornin's afther we found out what he was, I wondher?" And, to intimate his meaning, he slowly took out of his bosom a large, clumsily-shaped pistol, laid it on the table, and scowled at it.—"And let him be ould Nick, or ould Nick's mother, or even a Christin of any sort, that is a lookin' too close at us, I'd have him be on his guard, masther, honey."

"Bourke! had I time to spare for him, he should not, whoever he is, long remain hidden from me, were the earth heaped five fathoms above him. But for the present we must content ourselves with knowing that there *is* some meddling eye fixed on us, and watching our motions; that there *is* some clever hand,—(or at least some hand that thinks itself clever)—interfering in our affairs. And *that* is quite enough to make me push on the matter we have last been speaking about, with the more speed and spirit. Bourke, I can afford no longer delay. By the time I have mentioned, *that one* must be safely conveyed to the place you know of."

"I'd wager a silver shillin' against a brass farthin," answered Mr. Bourke, "that the boy that ud' thry to keep her from us might have a chance of getting his garthers knotted round his throat, instead of above his knee, masther."

"Well, then; be prepared, all of you, ye scoundrels. Mind me; there must be no bungling this time, if you wish to walk about the world with your heads on your shoulders. Do you hear me?"

"I do. And by this blessed mouth-wather," pursued Bourke, again kissing the lips he adored most—"you may sleep asy on it, I tell you."

"And *I* tell *you*, man, that on this occasion I will not endure disappointment. I did not care a great deal for the loss of that other, whom ye all let slip through your fingers so confoundedly: therefore, I half forgave ye, and let ye go unpunished. But, at your peril, let me find neither treachery nor mismanagement in the business now in hand. If I should detect any such thing, it is not merely the loss of my bounty you shall have to dread. Were there a dozen of you, each armed with a pistol, like that before you, loaded to the muzzle, and the muzzles of all pointed to my breast, every man of you should feel that I was still your master, and able to bequits with you."

"Shadhurth!—I'll dhrink to you on the bargain."

Here, because we do not very much relish their society, we will leave "the strange Man of the Inch" and his worthy associate to arrange their plans; and, with the reader's permission, change the scene.

CHAPTER XII.

ANNIE KENNEDY had not the slightest recollection of her father; and of her mother but a very dreamy one remained on her mind. She remembered a weeping, delicate woman, whom, during her infancy, she used to call mother: her most vivid reminiscences of this person were mixed up with painful and mysterious feelings. She could relate her efforts to scramble up upon a bed, in which the lady lay, as it had been her wont to do; her agonies at having been held back by a mild, compassionate-looking man, whose kindness of manner, and whose endeavours to soothe her childish grief, partly reconciled her to the opposition she experienced from him. And her memory was further strongly impressed with the mode finally adopted to console her. Having succeeded in pacifying her a little, the gentleman led her back to the bed she had vainly tried to scale, and the person resting on it placed a ribbon round her neck, to which was attached a shining bauble that pleased her childish eye. Nor did Annie, to this day, forget the clinging kiss, and the straining embrace accompanying the gift.

Soon after this, she was led by the mild-looking man to a strange residence, of which the novelty, and, indeed, the splendour, delighted her. But she grew tired of the excitement, and cried to be taken back to her mother. This request was not, however, complied with; and she experienced, for some time, much misery. But, at last, she became unconsciously reconciled to the idea of the separation. She yet wore the little present she had received from her dying mother. It was a very small double miniature, having on one side, as she had since been told, the portrait of her father, and, on the other, that of her mother. And she now distinctly understood that the placid man, who had gained such influence over her, at the moment of her infantine tribulation at the bed-side of her dying mother, was Mr. Connor Kennedy, with whom she had since

lived, who had adopted her as his daughter, and to whose considerable property she was to be sole heiress.

Even in her earliest days, the patient melancholy of Mr. Kennedy's countenance, its expression of a calm endurance of misfortune, had excited Annie's unconscious sympathy, and her young heart had experienced a desire to be, so far as in her lay, his consolation. She could even now call to mind that the chief happiness of those childish days used to be occasioned by seeing her guardian's sad features relax into a smile, as the result of her efforts to soothe and please him.

As she grew up, the child took delight in the performance of little personal services for him. In her opinion still, no one but herself could settle the cushions of his arm-chair, or place it in the exact spot he liked, either by the fire in winter, or near the window, overlooking the garden, in summer.

Upon the evening of the day of George Blundell's visit to her, as related in the last chapter, Annie and Mr. Kennedy were, as usual, seated together. For some time the subject of their conversation had been the new position of affairs between the young girl and her lover.

Even on this delicate topic, Annie saw no reason for disguising her thoughts from her guardian. There was something so gentle and touching about his manner and character, something so nearly resembling the softness of her own sex, that a confidence of a most unqualified nature had always existed between them. And, to assist in establishing this understanding, never had Mr. Kennedy used a word or a look of harshness towards Annie. The idea of being reserved with such a friend could not enter into her thoughts.

From the beginning of her attachment to George Blundell, her guardian had scarce ever hesitated to question her upon the state of her feelings, nor Annie to express them. The last remarkable interview between the lovers was therefore, talked over by the fireside, without, as we have before intimated, the slightest reservation, except, we are bound to admit, in one instance.

Annie had given her solemn promise that she would guard the secret of George Blundell's intimacy with the disreputable person lately come into their neighbourhood. She was compelled, therefore, to conceal so much from her old confidant.

"Yet Annie, although you will not explain to me why it is you are so satisfied of the boy's innocence, you will have me go the full length of agreeing with you in your conviction of it."

"Exactly so, dear sir."

"He has bound you to honourable secrecy?"

"He has, Sir. In my mind and heart I rely upon the statements George Blundell has made. But even if he had not wished me to guard his secret, there is that about it which would seem to compel me to be as reticent on the matter, even with you, as you now find me."

"But, Annie, his wishing you to remain silent is, in itself, a circumstance full of suspicion, in the young man's conduct. If his exculpation will bear scrutiny, why is it to be hidden from every one, except the person most likely to take it upon mere trust?"

"Should I attempt to give you any answer," returned the girl, "I should run the risk, at all events, of hinting what I am bound not to breathe a word of."

"Well, my child, perhaps you can satisfy me on one point.—Did Mr. Blundell make it appear satisfactory to you that he had no intimate connection with that very doubtful character, called the strange Man of the Inch?"

"My dear Sir," Annie said, after a short pause, "I am sure that without the slightest breach of trust, I may reply to your present question. Instead of denying an intimate connection with this man, he openly avowed it to me. Yet, upon the nature of that connection he rests his chief defence against the charge of participation in the acts in which they are supposed to be jointly concerned. Here, again, I must add, I am not at liberty to explain farther."

"Very, very strange, indeed," mused Mr. Kennedy.

"I admit it is, Sir. Yet, if my judgment be not very shallow, I think I thoroughly understand the case. Indeed, I can confidently say that, to my own mind, George Blundell's acquittal is not pronounced by me on a hasty examination, or upon untenable grounds."

"You may feel all this to be very true, Annie, as matters appear to you, and as you feel they ought to be. But, dear child, your heart has not been unemployed in forming your decision. I fear, much fear, that the head is more frequently the partisan than the judge, when appealed to perseveringly, by that courageous little tempter."

"Not in this case, dear Sir, I think!"

"Annie, dear Annie, I vouch to you my own experience in proof of my assertion. Alas! too well I know how unnerved the reasoning power becomes, when the heart tampers with its decisions. Oh! how filmed and warped then is the vision of the understanding!

How inevitably is it deceived!—Annie, the heart decks the brow of a barren precipice with flowers, and is enticed on by the visionary florescence it creates, heedless of the gulf below. And on it will rush, exulting in its wilfulness, until it falls down, crushed for ever. Annie, I have, as I intimated to you before now, experienced this fatuity. Forgive me, then, if I impugn your judgment until I can examine the foundation on which it rests."

"Dear Sir," repeated Annie, though, perhaps, not now with quite as much firmness of manner as she had hitherto displayed, "I can only say again that, were I at liberty to detail his defence, you would deliver, with me, a verdict of acquittal in favour of George Blundell."

"And. Annie, *I* can only repeat, that until I know his defence as intimately as you do, I must withhold my verdict. I believe you will not call me an uncharitable man; yet this is my conclusion."

"My best friend," cried Annie, with tears in her eyes, "what living creature can call you that? to me you are charity personified."

"My poor child!" answered Mr. Kennedy, mournfully, "even the fervour of the flattery you in all sincerity offer me is proof that the impulsive little tenant of your bosom is more than a match for your too complying reason. Ever do you overrate my claims to anything like good qualities, while you have no eye for the deep and visible blemishes of my character. Listen to me, dear Annie. Even yet I am unwillingly bound to say that I consider this young man an unfit visiter here."

"I have, myself told him so, Sir; he is not to visit me at all. Nay, communication of every kind is to cease between us, until he shall be able to prove his innocence to the world's full face."

"Thank you, my dear, thank you—" Mr. Kennedy said, approvingly taking her hand.

"Or until, Sir,"—Annie blushed and hesitated.

"Well, my dear child? or until——"

"That is, Sir, unless the world continue to condemn him, without reason, for an unreasonably long period. In such a case, Sir, and when there is no friend left to him, but myself,"—she hesitated again.

"O my poor Annie! I thought as much—Heart, heart alone, child, has been you counsellor. I admire the noble confidence of

your nature. I acknowledge the great value of your sentiment, in the abstract; but I fear its present prudence. You will believe me, Annie, I can have nothing but your dear happiness in view. But I will shew you, that the heart's promptings alone are not to be taken as our guide. And this I shall do by laying before you the example of one who has been t eir victim, their miserable victim. Dear child, in the hope that I may be your warning, I will give you the history of my owu secret griefs, although the recital of them may inflict at first a keen wound on your affectionate heart. Even although it probe anew those which, for half my life, have been festering in mine."

"Dear, dear Sir," pleaded Annie; "I have always forborne to question you on this subject, because, giddy as I am, I could perceive that the retrospect would be most distressing to you: do not now, I entreat you, my friend and father, cause yourself pain on my account. Whatever your advice may be, I will follow it merely because you offer it, assured as I am that you will never advise me against my affections, if those affections deserve your sanction."

"My good and sensible child, notwithstanding my long repugnance to enter into the secrets of a dark past, I have lately begun to feel, while thinking it might be necessary for your instruction, that the effort might have its balm as well as its pain for me. And well I know, dear Annie, that a commiserating ear will here listen to my disclosures. That in you I shall have a true, a sympathising listener."

Annie, her candid eyes meeting his, raised his hand to her lips.

"Yes, yes, my child;—no use of words to give me the assurance. Indeed, for some years I have had the intention of confiding my cares to you, and what time for doing so can be fitter than the present, when I see a probability of your suffering from causes resembling those to which I owe my own wretchedness?

CHAPTER XIII.

"You are not ignorant, my child, of the light in which the world regards me. While you were yet a little girl, I well remember your running home to me one day, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, after your defence of me against the charges of a young com-

panion: I remember, too, that the moment you saw me, you not only repeated all that had been said, but proclaimed your own generous disbelief of the calumnies. On that occasion I declared to you that I had been much belied: now I solemnly repeat the assertion. You know by whom I was rescued from poverty and neglect: you also know that the world accuses me of the blackest ingratitude and of the most hideous treachery, in return for the obligations heaped upon me by my cousin, Harry Stokesbury. Annie, the world seldom sees beneath the surface of things. Motives for actions it will scarce go to the trouble of calculating; and where there is room for conjecture, condemnation follows, instead of extenuation. No matter—with that hasty and uncharitable world I have had for twenty years no communication. It has judged me as it thought proper, and I have remained silent towards it, and secluded from it. Its sympathy I could not expect to find; its pleasures had no attraction for me. In a word, I have left it to deal with me as it pleased, and hardly it *has* dealt with me.

"Harry Stokesbury most generously rescued me from early distress: with his patronage, he gave me his affection. Did I only hate him in return? No—my dear child—he had my love for his love. Although in one lamentable instance I accuse my weak nature of having done him wrong—yes—a wrong it was, however unwilled or unintended by me—yet in all others I was his true, loving cousin, and grateful friend.

"It is said of me that I fomented the quarrel between my benefactor and his father, for the purpose of grasping my cousin's patrimony. Oh! that is false—most false. I declare to you, my child, though it is the first time that I have ever opened my lips in self-exculpation, that whatever human ingenuity could devise, whatever the most ardent friendship could suggest, I tried in order to reconcile the father and son. But all my efforts were unavailing. The old man died in his rage; and, as evidence of its uncooled venom, disinherited his only child—bequeathed his property to me, comparatively a stranger. Frightful to add, with almost his last breath, he cursed his offspring. But, my child, from the moment I became possessor of that property, nothing was ever farther from my thoughts than to take advantage of the angry bequest, which legally made it mine.—The vengeance of my cousin burst on me unawares before explanation could be offered to him. Had this not been the case, he would have learned that every shilling of his own had been treasured up for him. It was, in fact, my intention to have put into his hands an authenticated account, after having burned his

father's will in his presence. But he had scarce heard one sound of my voice, when he left me unable to utter another. Nay—he parted from his country before I was sufficiently recovered to speak with him, or even to write to him. For even upon the unhappy public occasion which doomed his expatriation, I could not appear. Thank God, at any rate, for having been saved from such a terrible exhibition of my feelings!

"The world wonders why I have lived, and why I do live, so much within my apparent income. But to this hour, never have I applied to my own uses one penny of Harry Stokesbury's fortune. When I am gone, it will be seen that I have stored up its annual produce, increasing it, even, by every means. On our humble expenditure in this house, dear Annie, I have not, in truth, dispensed more than half of the interest of my wife's fortune. For all this, you have nothing but my word, but I am assured that, with you, my word is sufficient warrant of the truth.

"But there is another matter, my child, regarding which, I wish my conscience could bear me out as freely as it does upon the subject I have just spoken of. And here it is that I hope to instruct your heart, Annie, and to warn it to examine carefully the present state of its inclinations.

"By a clause in old Mr. Stokesbury's will, I was to be his heir, only on the condition of espousing his ward, Mary Bryan. My censurers assert that when the will became declared, I wedded her, in order to insure her guardian's property, as well as her own. Such was not the case, and here I have more than my assertions to offer. The registry of this parish, compared with the date of the will, would prove that I was Mary Bryan's husband two months before that will was known to be in existence.

"Now, dear girl, give me all your attention. As the ward of the elder Stokesbury, poor Mary Bryan lived under the same roof with him, young Harry, and myself. Oh!—if ever an angel spirit animated human form, it did that of Mary! All mildness and gentleness, all goodness and all loveliness, shone softly from out her heavenly blue eyes. Kind as it was radiant, her smile seldom faded out: so soft, yet so thrilling was her voice, that it came upon your ear with the witching influence of that of the fabled syren. And this glorious creature was, by her father's dying command, to become the wife of her cousin, Harry Stokesbury.

"Harry may have loved her,—nay, it is impossible but that he must have loved her. But to tell you that *I* loved her, would be a foolish endeavour to define, by cold words, the perfect prostration

of heart and soul, of mind and existence, with which I bowed me down before her. But I do most solemnly and most sincerely declare to you, my good, dear child, as well as to the face of my God, who hears me,—that, day and night, hour by hour, with incessant effort, I struggled to repress the very slightest symptom of the passion which devoured me. First, it appeared to me the wildest presumption to calculate even a remote possibility of winning from such a creature a return of love. And then came the sense of what an atrocious sin it would be in me to tempt even that impossibility, by the manifestation of a thousandth part of what I felt for her. Indeed, to this hour, after the most careful, and, God knows, frequent examination of myself, I am quite sure that, until a certain period to which I must shortly refer, I never gave her cause by act, word, or look, to suspect my attachment.

"But, oh!—the tortures of that time of self-repression! In the silence of the night, in my bed; in the solitude of nature, at midday, I have experienced over and over, the desolating contest of duty with love, of smiting conscience with raging passion! Tears, bitter tears, always proclaimed, however, at what side victory declared herself—and then I have lain, bodily-exhausted, as I was heart-hopeless.

"Some of the temptings of my spirit prompted me to ask myself the question—'*Does* Harry indeed love her?'—and I would foolishly, perversely answer—'No—he does not!—Where are the proofs of his affection?—of such an affection as Mary ought to command from all—of such an affection as she commands from me?' Then I would go on, idiot-like, till I had half-convinced myself that he cared nothing for his affianced bride. 'He at all times accosts her freely,' I continued, 'and never is embarrassed in her presence; I tremble from head to foot, not daring to raise my eyes to hers, if occasion requires that we converse together—Nay, his conduct towards her is scarcely respectful; I have seen him act similarly to many other women, for whom he professed no particular regard.' And thus, Annie—impotently, as well as impatiently reasoning, because I thought only through the heart—because, in fact, I did not think at all—thus, Annie, in spite of virtuous wishes and intentions, I allowed to continue within me a delusion which, at last, plunged me into irremediable ruin.

"Never had I dared to exchange with my idol even the few casual words rendered matter of course by our relative situations, without marking, at the same time, by my manner, the distance due from one in a dependent station, towards a superior person. But

whatever might have been my cousin Harry's feelings for Mary Bryan, it was quite evident to me that the young girl herself regarded him, not only with indifference, but with aversion. She was not ignorant of his wild habits—(perhaps they might deserve a worse name);—indeed, he made no great secret of them even to her ears. And she would weep at what I could perceive was her sense of his rudeness. And I have seen her shrink and shudder, when she witnessed the violent altercations which frequently took place between him and his father. For both, unfortunately, had very violent tempers; and neither was good Christian enough to curb the impulse of his passions. Often when, after leading the disputants into another room, and there partially succeeding in reconciling them to each other, I returned into her presence, I have found her in utter misery, writhing under the effects of present alarm, and anticipation of future wretchedness, at the prospect of becoming the wife of one so totally different from her own dispositions, tastes, and sentiments. Annie, I will not disguise from you—why should I do so?—that it was not always by mere observation of her conduct and manner, that I came to these conclusions: she has distinctly avowed to me, on those occasions, her thoughts and her feelings. And when I endeavoured to give her a more cheerful view of things, and to hold up to her what I believed to be a bright side of my cousin's character;—when I painted it as distinguished for generosity, and noble feeling, notwithstanding all its lapses,—then, more than once she timidly approached me, and, placing her hand on mine, said, in a tone of voice and with a look that made me tremble with delight and confusion,—'How can you advocate the cause of a man so unlike yourself?' Annie, my child, from time to time, such indications of a return of love for the love I bore to her heightened the battle between my sense of duty and the impulse of my weak heart, to something beyond my powers of description!

"On the very last occasion upon which my cousin and his father contended together—upon that dreadful day, when the son in his heated passion, although tempted by his parent's hand, outraged that parent beyond extenuation;—when he was obliged to fly from the house to avoid the shedding of his blood, by his father; upon that day I found Mary Bryan lying insensible on the carpet. She had been a witness of the terrible scene I have alluded to; had fainted; had been overlooked by us all, and now lay before me, not yet recovered from her swoon. Without the necessary reflection on what I was about to do, I impulsively caught her up in

my arms. While my heart throbbed, and my limbs trembled with apprehension, I used every means at hand to restore her to her senses.

"She opened her beautiful eyes; she glanced round in affright. Her look met mine, then instantly changed into an expression of such entire confidence, such melting appeal, that, together with the former confused state of my feelings, it deprived me of all presence of mind, all self-control.

"'My adored!' I cried, flinging myself at her feet, as she lay on a sofa—'my life's queen! my love! my love!' Then I covered my face with my hands, while the sobs choked me. I heard her start, and feebly raise herself, as she whispered—'Connor Kennedy, what have you said to me?—let me hear you distinctly?'

"'Forget my words, Miss Bryan!' I answered, 'my presumptuous, my criminal words. Thrust them from your mind, as if you had never heard them!'

"But Mary spoke again,—not as if she would forget; and—I replied; and—but why lengthen out the story of our fate?—Annie, in that moment of deep affliction—in that moment of utter terror of the character and temper of my cousin, and of horror at the prospect of being united to him, Mary Bryan told me that she loved me! That she had loved me as long and as well as I had loved her, and that no force on earth should ever compel her to become the wife of Harry Stokesbury. That, to avoid him, she would resign wealth, station, independence—every thing but honour;—that she would willingly abandon the fortune he was to receive with her hand. That she had rather—a thousand times rather—live with me in poverty, than with him, or with any man like him, upon the world's throne. Nay, that she would cheerfully work for her daily bread, for me and for herself, sooner than encounter the detested lot of a life at his side.

"Annie, my child, here was a trial for me! The heart-tearing contest in my bosom I feel again this very hour. Here was a happiness I had never even dreamt of, offered to my hand! here was a bliss, beyond all imagination, placed within my reach. How did I act? To my Maker, who hears me, I declare that I did not, as might be supposed, say to Mary that I accepted her love! I tried all in my power to make her believe that the unwilling words which had so lately escaped my lips were words of folly and of madness, and contained no applicable meaning. I could not, indeed, force myself to assert that I loved her not; conscience itself was not able to make me belie my affections. But, with miserable tears, I sought to point

out to her how treacherous would be my conduct, did I dare to avow my passion; I insisted upon the gratitude which I owed to my cousin; I described how base would be my return for all his bounties, were I to rob him of the treasure he had so long regarded as his own. And, when she insisted that Harry Stokesbury loved only her wealth, I endeavoured—feebly perhaps, because my conviction, I should rather call it my perverted impression, went the contrary way—but I did endeavour to convince her that he really loved her for herself, and that she would be happy as his wife. In short, I left her presence on that occasion, without renewing any declaration of the feelings that preyed on me—that lacerated the heart to which I pressed them for concealment, even as the cloaked animal fed upon the vitals of the Lacedemonian boy.

"Nor did I, upon the morrow, seek occasion to insure her love. Nor upon the next day, nor upon the next. For some time Mary and I met as strangers,—alas! more strangely and embarrassedly than strangers could meet. But, at last, I perceived that the beautiful idol of my adoration began to droop; that her cheek was fading; her eye losing its lustre; that her whole air and manner were weighed down. Then, oh! how often did I detect myself in the impulse, almost in the act, of casting myself before her, and proclaiming, with ecstasy, the love which I bore her! But still, still, I could hold myself back by the withering recollection that, in so doing, I should stamp and seal to all eternity my own character, as an ingrate and a traitor. Oh! that this stern sense of duty had never quitted me! Oh! that it had ever, ever stood erect at my side, a mail-clad and frowning sentinel, watching over my moments of human weakness! Above all things, O that my insidious thought of my cousin's indifference to Mary had never taken possession—tempting, fiendish possession, of my breast—my harassed and my frail heart! My child, let my fate, I say it again, be your warning.

"Annie, I fell at last. She heard from me renewed expressions of my love for her; and, with my arms around her, we knelt and vowed, in the face of Heaven, a mutual vow. Then, for a short time every thing was forgotten by me. In the intoxicating consciousness of interchanged affection between Mary Bryan and me, all possible consequences, all possible remorse, vanished from my view. But even the drunkard, in the midst of his orgies, will sometimes feel an icy and sickening conviction of the crime, as well as the hollowness, of his self-forgetting and unnatural joys. And I, that day, I was a most miserable wretch: I started away from my paradise of

enjoyment, to seek the deepest solitude, like the ambitious, fallen angel, hurled at once from heaven into hell. How distinctly do I remember the place into which, after escaping from the house, I plunged myself. It was a thick, though small, clump of trees, surrounded by a paling in the paddock; into it I rushed; and there, scratched and stung by the thorns and the nettles, its sole obscure brushwood, I lay insensible to bodily discomfort. The black sin of ingratitude, the certain presence of it, rose up and wound around me, like the coils of a hideous serpent! I had betrayed my benefactor; the benefactor of my earliest years! The man, the relation, the friend who had saved me from absolute misery! The man who had given me education, or, at least, the opportunities for acquiring it!—who had taken my mind out of that quagmire state of inferiority in which it might have been self-neglected, or else trampled down!—who, along with all that, had afforded me abundant means of superfluously luxurious enjoyment;—and who, far above all else, had ———I was sure of it!—conferred upon me his heart's affection.——Oh! Annie, my child, my child! I could do nothing but hide my face, even, as I may say, from myself, and cry—cry bitter tears.

"Child! there is no real misfortune, but the conscience that accuses of crime!—A man may be plunged to the chin in apparent wretchedness! Poverty, sickness, long and racking pains may assail him: worse than this, even worldly neglect—even the avoiding of you by one dear to you, who imagines he has a cause of anger, or of superiority over you;—all this is nothing, nothing compared with one pang of an unquiet conscience!

"I still lay prone in my solitude, when I heard voices around me calling out my name. I rose and replied. A messenger sought me from my cousin, Harry Stokesbury. I stood before that man weighed down with a sense of shame and degradation. With almost a felon's trepidation, and, I suppose, with almost a felon's look, I received at his hands a letter from his employer.

"Harry had now been absent from his home more than three months. During that time, his own servant, the individual who at present confronted me, had been a confidential agent between us. We had, therefore, kept up a constant correspondence. His demands for money were incessant, yet I found means to supply them. His father had bestowed considerable sums on me, for the purpose of proving, as he gave me to understand, that his refusal of the constant demands of his son did not arise from a parsimonious disposition, but rather because he would not encourage Harry's spendthrift

habits. Every shilling thus received by me was transmitted through his favourite servant to my cousin. When such sources failed, I borrowed for him, wherever I could obtain credit: I even requested and took loans from the gentle Mary, who never refused my applications, because I imagined I was only anticipating a resource which would ultimately become my cousin's undisputed right.

"The note which this confidential messenger now put into my hands contained only a few words, merely intimating that Harry was upon the point of setting off for a very distant residence; that urgent necessity compelled his immediate departure; and that the bearer would verbally convey to me a request which he required me to fulfil, if I cared for him or loved him.

"I demanded of the man the nature of the service I was to perform; and learned, in the first place, that a sum of money, of which the amount surprised me, was necessary. But how shall I express to you the effect produced on me by the second portion of the courier's intelligence! In the strictest confidence, on the part of Harry Stokesbury, I was informed that he had been recently married; and the name of his bride was supplied to me. For some time before, I had been aware that Harry had occasionally visited the young person in question; to my mind there was, therefore, probability in the servant's statement. Probability to *my mind*, I say, Annie; but, mark me still,—to my weak and credulous heart there was, what there ought not to have been,—certainty!—Yes, my child. And even when my reason proposed a close and cautious investigation of the subject, that deceitful heart, panting with selfish exultation, turned me aside from my purpose. Oh child! I wanted to be deceived! that was the real truth. I wanted to believe myself made free, by Harry Stokesbury's own renunciation of her, to espouse Mary Bryan. The loosest evidence of such an act, therefore, satisfied me. And when thus relieved from the tortures of conscience, which, but a few moments before, had been fastened upon me like gnawing reptiles, can you not imagine the wild turbulence of joy which I, at length, experienced?

"The sum of money required of me, considerable as it was, I soon made up: with it in his possession, the man went away. And next day I became, in secret, Mary Bryan's husband.

"For more than nine months afterwards I did not hear of or from my cousin. He had not intimated to me the place of his intended new residence, and I could not, therefore, expect that a letter from me would directly reach him. I did frequently write to the not remote retreat he had chosen, when first expelled from

home by his father's violence, but no answer, from him ever came to my hand.

"Two months after my marriage with his ward, old Mr. Stokesbury died; died, too, ignorant of that circumstance, although his last will proved that he had wished it. In vain did I assail, with entreaties and prayers, his death-bed, in order to prevail upon him to forgive his erring son, and call him home to receive a last blessing.

"Mary and I lived on together, under the roof which had now become Harry Stokesbury's, the two happiest of God's creatures. I longed for the presence of my generous cousin to witness, and I was sure, to enjoy, our bliss. He came not; and still I had no tidings of him, directly or indirectly. My wife made me the father of a glorious boy. Unable herself to nurture her baby, it was given in charge to a young married woman, residing in the neighbourhood. She was yet confined to her bed, slowly regaining her strength: the infant's nurse suddenly burst, in distraction, into her chamber, and told the mother that her first-born child had been torn away from her arms; and that, with curses and with threats of destruction towards it on his lips, Henry Stokesbury had been the ravisher.

"This fearful and abrupt announcement threw my poor Mary into a dangerous fever. My fears and agonies for her were intense. So, too, were my misgivings, on another account. Then first did I begin to doubt my former belief that Harry was indifferent to Mary Bryan: then did I tremble at the thought that the last message I had received from him might have been a fabrication!

"I was not long left in uncertainty. The terrified young nurse had made her appearance towards nightfall. That same night I heard the house noisily broken into. My wife had fallen into a fitful slumber. I was sitting at her bed-side. The door was kicked open; Harry Stokesbury, with all the rage of a maniac in his look and manner, dashed into the room. Suddenly feeling certain of the supposed grounds for his coming violence, in vain did I start up to offer him an explanation; in vain did I implore him to listen to me, but for an instant. He beat me down with his powerful hand; with his foot he crushed me and trampled upon me, till I lay almost insensible. Loud and long shrieks from my wife partly recalled my fluttering mind. Ghastly and bleeding as I was, I staggered up and cast myself upon the bed. In an instant she was dead in my arms.

"Consciousness now quite forsook me; and indeed, as I have been informed, did not, during a long, long period, revisit me. In

fact, my child, do not let me startle you by the avowal—for many blank and dreary years, I was a melancholy madman."

But the listener did start and shudder, too. Her guardian continued:

"When, after the long night of forgetfulness, reason's blessed rays again dawned upon me, I learned that Harry Stokesbury had been prosecuted and convicted for the commission of the acts I have described to you. Oh! had I been, at that time, a conscious creature, never should he have been questioned on the matter!—Sooner would I have seen my adored wife die again—sooner, sooner should my own heart's blood have flowed, than that Harry Stokesbury should have stood before the world as a culprit! I would have acknowledged the justice of his vengeance. I would have cast my wretched life, a thousand times, were it possible, between him and public disgrace!

"Yes. And I would have given up to him his right—his inheritance: I would have resigned to him even my Mary's dower. I would have endeavoured in any way to prove to him that I was not quite the ungrateful wretch he supposed me to be. And then I would have hidden my ill-starred head from the world, and lived—if that were practicable, upon my recollections. But I learned that my cousin had been convicted as a felon, on my account, and banished from his country—then, that he had found a grave under the roaring sea. And I regarded myself, from first to last, as his destroyer!

"It was only very lately that I discovered the fatal error, to which I must immediately attribute my misery. You know Kyran Donnelly, Annie? A short time ago I employed him as a servant in this house. He had been the bearer of my cousin's last note to me. He it was who had feigned that damning message, from Harry Stokesbury, which informed me that he was married. Some months since, Kyran appeared before me, very penitent. He acknowledged his former crime, and seemed to me so truly contrite, as the unintentional author of my misfortunes, that I took him into my service—particularly as I understood that he was in great distress. And most particularly because, notwithstanding any former wrong against myself, I knew him to have been in early days the favoured servant of the ill-fated Harry Stokesbury.

"Donnelly's motive for his conduct, upon the miserable occasion of all our sorrows, seemed to me to be high-minded, and I could not blame him. He really did suppose that his master was the husband of the young person whom he had mentioned to me; he had not been

unaware of the state of Mary Bryan's feelings; and, under the impression that he was doing a service to both parties, he gave to me, as direct information from his master, what was but the result of his own invention. I forgave him, too, on another account. I recollected that I should not have received his fatal message without rigorous examination, and I said to myself, that since I *had* taken it on trust to my treacherous heart, I was much more guilty than the bearer of it. Well—no matter—I have forgiven poor Donnelly—resentment, now, is not in the slightest degree a quality of my nature. For nothing that has happened to me, do I reproach any body but myself.

"You have heard the history of my life. You now understand why, since you have known me, from your childhood to your womanhood, I have hidden my head from the world. That world bestows upon me many hard names; well! perhaps it punishes me only as I deserve. At all events, I have bidden adieu to it without a murmur. Though not as guilty as it would make me, still I know that I am very guilty.

"And you will now also understand, my dear child, why you have never seen the cloud of sorrow pass from my brow. You will now understand why I have so seldom smiled upon the sports of your childhood, the witcheries of your girlhood, and, I may say, the graces of your womanhood."

"Dear, dear friend," said Annie, her tears falling upon his hand as she again raised it to her lips. "I do not recollect that I have ever yet wanted the encouragement, or the cheerfulness, or the sympathy of your smile."

"Well, Annie—I can only thank you for that generous assertion. But you will now understand why I have scarce ever seemed cheerful in my own house;—why, even my own servants look upon me with coldness, with affright perhaps; certainly with want of interest, and sometimes with rudeness;—why I am not able to assert myself firmly and openly as a man ought to do, even upon the slightest occasion of annoyance. In fact, you will understand why I am the nervous, the shivering, the almost unmanly creature you know me—why a loud word makes me start;—why the appearance of violence makes me recoil. And, I wish particularly to say, why this day, this very day, I avoided the presence of our friend, Mr. George Blundell, when I saw, or when I thought I saw, his passion boiling for vent, against any opposing obstacle.

"It is not courageous to admit what I am about to add—but I have never boldly raised up my head since I was left, trampled down

and disfigured in my own blood, at the bed-side of my wife. Before that, I had had strong moral courage, and, without boasting, I could prove the assertion,—although I never was a strongly-built man: and certainly never a brawling one. It may be, that all I have suffered has weakened the nerves of my body—so as to give me the semblance of almost a trembling girl—when I see the least threat of approaching turbulence.

"Child, you have early given away the affections of your young and generous heart. Mine is a history of the heart. Profit by my example, Annie. Under your present circumstances, let not the mere impulse of your bosom determine you in the way you have to go. Do not act because you want to act. Listen to the whisperings of affection, to their blandishments and their sophistry, with suspicion, nay, with alarm. In a word, keep my fate before your mind, and then I shall not have told my sad tale in vain."

We have followed Mr. Kennedy's narrative without interruption, because it seemed unnecessary to break it up by mentioning the agitated and frequent pauses he made in his discourse; or by describing the effects it produced, from time to time, upon his fair auditor. Now, it is sufficient to say that, at its close, the gentle girl felt deeply for the sufferings of her guardian, while exerting all her powers to bind up and revivify his bruised spirit.

The same night, at a late hour, Annie and her attendant, were seated in the bed-room of the former. They had been engaged in very earnest conversation, and had not therefore noticed how the the time flew. The other members of the household had long before retired to rest. All was silent around them;

The slumbering pulse of night stood still;

and, but for the low whisperings of Grace Carroll's voice, the fairy flutter of the moth's wing, as it whirled round the candle, might have been heard.

It was the nature of her theme, as well perhaps as the solemn midnight hour, and the awfully congenial silence, which subdued to a murmuring cadence Grace's usually vigorous tones. She had been descanting at great length on the supernatural endowments of the strange Man of the Inch. She had been telling of his foul nightly revels with the devil and his imps, amid blazing lights, shouts of laughter, and sometimes, strange to say, shrieks of seeming agony; as also of the spells which he cast on ill-starred females. And Grace stated, as a well-received opinion, nay, as an

incontrovertible truth, that an impress stamped by the enemy of man, disfigured that side of his face which he so carefully kept concealed; and she was most eloquent on the nature of the unholy fire which burned in his uncovered eye.

Had Annie been uninfluenced by a pre-occupation of mind on the present subject, she might have smiled at all this improbable exaggeration. But she could not forget her own disagreeable encounter with the strange Man, nor the singular warnings of the Mayor of Wind-gap: besides this individual, so universally dreaded and detested, was the father of George Blundell. She listened therefore, attentively, and all but assentingly, to every thing Grace Carroll was saying, or could say; bending down towards the girl, who sat on a footstool, some distance from her, in the attitude of one who is absorbingly interested.

Suddenly she laid her hand upon the shoulder of her humble companion. "Stop, Grace," she whispered, "do you hear a foot on the stairs?"

Unable to utter a word, Grace gazed at her in gaping terror.

"There certainly is some one creeping up the stairs," continued Annie, turning deadly pale. "And my door remains unbolted, I believe!"

With the speed of great fear, agitated and trembling as she was, she sprang towards the door. But she had not reached it, when the handle of its lock turned; it swung wide open, and, before she could effectually cry out for assistance, she was seized, and her voice stifled. Four men, carefully, though absurdly disguised, had entered the room at once. Grace Carroll, simultaneously with the measures adopted towards her mistress, was bound hand and foot, and also well gagged.

"One word louder than your breath," said a growling voice in the girl's ear, "and I'll slit your wind-pipe, as nate as ever the little cook in the kitchen done it for the turkey."

They rummaged the apartment for articles of outside dress; and as many as they could find were hastily forced upon Annie's person, by the rough hands of her not gentle attendants. This done, she was borne away with well-arranged silence and celerity. Through the open hall-door of the house they conveyed her into the street; then rapidly to the nearest suburb. There they placed her on one of those small "cars," used by the peasantry of Ireland: two of her captors holding her securely on it, drove away with the utmost speed of which such a machine is capable.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE dreadful voice in her ear, threatening her with destruction if she did not remain quiet, nearly deprived Grace Carroll of her senses. Implicit obedience to its command she was, however, able to determine upon; and she, therefore continued for a considerable lapse of time, lying upon the floor, where, with her mouth tightly muffled, her elbows pinioned, and her ankles and knees well tied up, she had been flung by her rude assaulters. As still as if she were in her coffin, Grace lay, mentally overwhelmed beneath the hugeness of her terror. Her mistress was absolutely carried out of the chamber without the poor girl's knowledge of the fact. Selfish fear altogether bewildered her sensations.

At length, however, her consternation began slightly to decrease. She became sensible that a dead silence reigned around her: then arose a recollection of her mistress. And the thought, having once gained admission into her mind, was too engrossing to be dismissed. She ventured to move her head from one side to another, and thus enabled herself to take a piecemeal survey of the room. A candle, wasted away to the socket, flickered on the chimney, affording, however, sufficient light for Grace's purposes. Her mistress was no where to be seen.—Her mistress was gone!—was forced away from her!—All poor Grace's merely selfish terrors vanished.—After many efforts, and after repeatedly rolling about the floor, like a fettered calf, she succeeded in gaining a sitting posture; then she ingeniously unloosed the bandage from her mouth: finally, her cries and yells resounded through the house.

In a few minutes, all the inmates of the establishment, with one exception, were before her. They unbound Grace. But, for some time, she could assert nothing but that her young mistress was in the hands of that terror of maidens, and walking challenge to all true knights, the strange Man of the Inch! How did she know that? She was sure of it. How was she sure of it? Because she was. No farther could Grace go.

The nervous, hypochondriacal Mr. Kennedy was scarce able to do more than tremble and lament with the females of his household; and the task of eliciting from the half-crazed Grace Carroll something like an intelligible account of the misfortune she so clamourously proclaimed, devolved upon Joseph Fitzgerald, his aged and demure butler.

In answer to the questions of this individual, she still positively asserted that the strange Man of the Inch, in his proper person, had entered the apartment, leading on twelve men, at least, all, as well as himself, with vizors on their faces.

Joseph Fitzgerald interrupted her to ask how, if the strange Man had worn a vizor, could she be so very sure of his features?

"How? was it how that happened, they were for asking her? Sure, if a body would know him before that night, with the vizor on that he always wore over more than a good half of his face, wasn't it the aisiest thing in life to know him, every bit as well, when he only dhrew it over the other half? More be token, what other livin' Tory, on the face of the earth, *could* snap up her young misthress from her?"

Now, Joseph Fitzgerald had certain misgivings that another person might prove, notwithstanding all this reasoning, to be Annie's abductor. And he felt great relief in consequence. For, if he were right, his young mistress's present condition was not so hopeless a one as that insisted upon for her, by her distracted attendant.

He had understood that young George Blundell was a rejected lover. Upon the evening when Annie had refused to grant him an interview, he had seen him rush out of the house; and was shocked and alarmed at the black expression of the young man's countenance, believing it, at the time, to indicate an innate character, capable of any act of desperation. Upon his departure from Annie, after the last recorded conversation between them, honest Joseph had also encountered George; and though his brow did not wear a continued fierceness of mien, still, it was far from being as calm as, for general peace-sake, it ought to have been. And he had not since been near the house, nor had he sent message, nor letter. That looked bad. Besides, it was more natural and probable that he should be the offender in this present instance, than a man who, tainted as his public character might be, had not, to Joseph's knowledge, ever beheld his young lady. Under all the circumstances, the butler's suspicions fastened on George Blundell; and if he could make out and prove his case, no great calamity had occurred, after all. Miss Annie had only been run away with by a man she loved dearly, in her heart, whatever lovers' nonsense had set them quarrelling of late. No doubt, the boy would marry her, and then every thing would go right, again!

With this end in view, Joseph Fitzgerald cross-questioned Grace Carroll, hoping to shake her testimony, as to the undoubtable presence of the strange Man, on the late occasion. But, upon this

point, Grace was invulnerable. Nay, she began to add to her former assertions, that it was the strange Man, himself, who had carried her mistress down stairs in his arms, all the time that she, the witness, saw him as plain in the back, "as ever she saw a pot of potatoes bilin' on the fire." (It is evident that either Grace is, or that we are, the utterers of a bouncing imagination.)

Joseph changed his ground of attack. Had she any knowledge of the faces, or persons, of any other man of the party?"

"Musha, no. The fright was too big, in her eyes, to let her mind any one but the strange Man, and her poor young misthress."

"Was she positively sure that young Mr. Blundell had not been in the room?"

Grace, with a sudden catching of breath, dropped her jaw, rolled her eyes, and remained cogitatively silent. She had heard nothing of George Blundell's explanation with Annie, but she *had* seen him, upon more than one occasion, in company with the strange Man of the Inch. Juff Carroll insisted, and Grace firmly believed, that he had assisted the strange Man in forcing away her cousin Peggy. No doubt, as all the world said, they were associates in every crime. And having rapidly called all this to mind, now Grace did begin to wonder at herself, aloud, for not having before recollected all that she really and truly had seen! In fact, a new and convincing light broke upon her as she added, "Och, vourneens! I'm a fool of the world. For, now that the senses are coming back to me, I'm as good as book-sure that it *was* Mr. George Blundell, his own self, that whispered them wicked words about the turkey into my ear! Wouldn't I know his voice from a thousand, as good rights I have?"

But proofs for his purpose, better than those which Grace had given, awaited the sagacious Joseph. Bellowings of a human voice were, at this instant, heard distinctly, though remotely, in the lower, and more remote parts of the premises.

It had been mentioned that when Grace loudly invoked the attention of the household, only one individual of it had failed to attend her summons. This was a man who slept in the basement story of the establishment. He was the same who has been mentioned by Mr. Kennedy in his narrative to Annie;—the bearer, in fact, some twenty years before the present time, of the message from young Harry Stokesbury to Connor Kennedy, which directly caused all the misfortunes that followed the marriage of Harry's protegé with Mary Bryan. We need not remind the reader that Mr. Kennedy, (at least according to his own statement,) from pity

for his destitute situation, as from a wish to be a friend even to the humblest person who had been connected with his cousin, had lately taken Patrick Donnelly into his employment. The voice of Patrick Donnelly it was which now attracted general attention. Joseph Fitzgerald descended, and found Patrick bound in his bedstead: a piece of wood and a strip of his bed-clothes lay near to him, which, he said, he had just been enabled to force out of his mouth. He was set at liberty, and interrogated, and his answer greatly raised the hopes of Joseph Fitzgerald. Patrick Donnelly had retired to rest early. He had been awakened from his sleep by a consciousness of personal violence. Before he could defend himself he had been so effectually manacled and gagged, like poor Grace, above stairs, that he became incapable of giving any resistance, or even of alarming the house. But, during his short and vain struggle with his captors, a black vizor had fallen from one of their faces, and, by the light of a lantern, held by another, he had distinctly recognised George Blundell. As to the strange Man of the Inch, he could only speak by surmise. The lantern had not flashed upon the features of any person of the party, except those of George Blundell. But he had heard of the strange Man of the Inch, as every body had; and, according to the different descriptions conveyed to him, from one source or another, it might be, that one individual answering in height, in manner, and in general expression, to that formidable fright, seemed to have had command over the rest. Still, Patrick would not swear to this as distinctly as he could to the identical presence of George Blundell.

Joseph Fitzgerald very naturally made light of the presumptive case against the strange Man, even upon the joint shewing of Grace and Patrick; assured on the contrary, from their corroborative evidence, that George Blundell was still the object of his legal pursuit.

The two trusty servants, Joseph and Patrick, proceeded to ascertain, as a preliminary step to justice, in what manner entrance had been effected. In the rear of Mr. Kennedy's house was an extensive yard, surrounded by high walls. A door opened into it from a lane, running by one of those walls. It appeared evident that that wall had been scaled; that some one had descended into the yard, and forced back the lock of the door, and removed its heavy wooden cross bolt. The lock of the door, leading from the yard to the kitchen of the house, had been cut away by a hand-saw, as the observers were enabled immediately to decide, and from the outside, too. It was also evident that the burglars must have known that Donnelly slept in the first portion of the residence, en-

tered by them. That, therefore, he had first been overpowered, secured, and silenced, in order to save them interruption in their progress to the upper regions of the house. We have been minute in the detail of these circumstances for the purpose of making the reader understand, in every way, how suspicion fastened upon George Blundell.

It is necessary also to take into consideration that, reckoning from the moment of Grace Carroll's selfish lethargy, and allowing for the time consumed in prevailing upon her to account for her cries, and her position, as also for that wasted in the investigation we have just recorded, more than four hours had elapsed, since Annie Kennedy's abduction, before any vigorous steps were even resolved upon, for bringing her home again.

Now, however, the first proceeding decided upon by Joseph Fitzgerald was that of seeking out, and securing, Mr. George Blundell. For this, a legal warrant to arrest his person became necessary. It was indispensable for Mr. Kennedy to give his name and his countenance to the measure; and, though with much nervousness and trepidation, he yielded to Joseph's shewing.

The house in which George Blundell lodged was, as may be recollected, almost exactly opposite to Mr. Kennedy's. At the moment that Mr. Kennedy and his party passed their own threshold, a tall figure, muffled in a loose outside coat, was in the act of opening, with a latch-key, the opposite door. All paused, to observe this person's motions. His key having performed its convenient office, he cautiously pushed back the door, and having stolen into the passage, secured it after him.

It was determined that, until the ends of justice should be attained, this person ought to be watched. Patrick Donnelly volunteered to stand as sentinel on the house, promising that, if he should attempt to re-issue into the street, he would secure him at any risk. This suggestion was adopted. Leaving Patrick upon his post, Joseph Fitzgerald, accompanied by Mr. Kennedy, and, (meaning no disrespect,) other subalterns, proceeded to take legal measures for arresting George Blundell.

They bent their steps to the residence of the Mayor of the city. They knocked loud and long at his shop door, the only one which gave entrance to his house: their summons was not speedily answered, as his Worship and his only maid-servant were sound sleepers. When he did appear behind the bench of justice—his counter—it first became indispensable he should try, by rubbing and scooping into his eye-sockets with his fat knuckles, to divert his

still somniferous inclinations. Before this process, words had been addressed to his ears, but he had heard them not.

When partially awakened, the Mayor listened very patiently, and, if one might judge by the staring of his large, globular, grey eyes, very attentively, also, to Joseph Fitzgerald's statement. But, whether it arose from some defect in the structure of his ear, or from some knot or twist of the optic nerve—his Worship failed to catch the subject submitted to him. He appeared, indeed, sadly puzzled how to act. Seeming to ponder and analyze, he took off hisred nightcap, and with it rubbed his bald pate, as if, by a scientific process, he would elicit, with its friction against the polished globe, some sparks of "wisdom and discretion." But the machine would not work. He then turned an imploring look on Mr. Kennedy. That gentleman's almost womanish, though mute grief, still more chilled his powers of mechanical comprehension—as atmospheric damp neutralizes the real electric apparatus. His glance next slowly sought the face of Joseph Fitzgerald; inquietude, impatience, even repulsion, were expressed thereon. In fact, finding no conductor to the surface of his cranium, he heaved a long, long sigh, and exclaimed—"Oh! my gracious!—I wish that Roger was here!"

Roger was accordingly sent for; and in a reasonable time made his appearance. The arrangement of his attire bespoke a hasty toilette. The long queue of his wig dangled over one shoulder—the back peak of his cocked-hat was before; he held his great sword in one hand, and his huge cudgel in the other; the knees of his small-clothes were unbuttoned; and his unstockinged splay-feet, supporting lean, hairy, spindle shanks, had been hastily thrust into untied brogues.

His Worship passed to Roger his own general recollections of what had been stated to him; but, in fact, he did no more than if he had handed to his officer, from off the shelf at his back, for the purpose of setting it right, one of his own tangled skeins of blay thread. Joseph Fitzgerald was obliged to repeat, for the ears of the pompous Roger Divey, a story which he had previously made plain enough.

The result was that, with great alacrity on the part of Roger, a warrant for the apprehension of George Blundell became quickly and duly perfected. Courageously buckling on his rapier, Roger, aided by two inferior officers, and followed by Joseph Fitzgerald, proceeded to execute it.

Donnelly was found faithfully at his post. Roger had now no

necessity to inflict upon the lion-faced knocker, the outrage that, upon a former occasion, he had thought himself bound to do. The servant girl was in the act of undoing the shutters of the lower windows; she had previously left open the hall-door. Without a word, Roger, attended by his followers, gained an entrance. Somehow or other, he had before now become acquainted with the statistics of the premises; he and his little band proceeded, therefore, up stairs, and without ceremony burst into George Blundell's sleeping chamber.

At the noise they made, the young man started up, sat upon the side of his bed, and gazed upon his intruders. He was partly dressed; evidently he had fallen asleep in his clothes, of which some portions were soiled with mire. Roger Divey quickly pointed out these ominous appearances; as also a loose outside coat, a slouched hat, and a mask, which lay tossed on a chair.

It would seem that George Blundell's first impulse had been to rush forward and question the rude disturbers of his slumbers. But it was now apparent that as soon as he recognised the officers of justice, he recoiled and sat still, as if checked by some embarrassing fear.—"Oh! my God!" they heard him ejaculate, although in a low tone—"what can this mean, so soon?"

"Misther Blundell, I beg it of you, in honour of the Lord"—began Joseph Fitzgerald, anxiously pressing forward.

"I say, you man, you, d'ye see me," interrupted Roger Divey, authoritatively pushing him back;—"keep yourself to yourself; and let there be none to the fore but party and party—as ye shall all answer the conthrary, at your peril—." Roger domineeringly cleared the room of every one but himself and its proprietor, and secured the door as carefully as he could.

"Isn't this a purty kittle o' fish, my young masther?" he resumed, facing round to George Blundell, assuming his fullest air of dignity—"soh!—the game was not fine enough for you, at Juff Carroll's, d'ye see me?"

"What is your charge now, my good fellow?" questioned George Blundell.

"What's the charge now?—By vartue o' the good oath I have taken, 'tisn't undher every stone you may kick up, that you'll find the body able to bring you clane out of it. Bud there is one honest man to make the venture for you, howsomever. An', someway or somehow, we—we know where we stand, when we are on our legs, God bless 'em."

"I have little doubt of your talents, in any case," said George,

"but I only wish to hear you state, at once, your present accusation against me."

Roger sank his official voice into an approach to social condescension, and, taking a chair, half-smiled, and bent himself forward, as he continued:—

"The week that's gone by, d'ye see me, a raal tory, d'ye see me, through an' through, came afore his worship an' myself—long may his worship reign!—The name he had on him was *Shawn-a-faustha;* —an' he was brought to us by a man o' the Dunns. That man wanted to make it as clear as a whistle that Shawn had a way of ating mutton that never hard the noise o' the butcher knife, rubbing to his steel; an' he thried to down-face the Mayor an' myself, d'ye see me, that the sheep he found, 'wid the skhin on it undher my poor Shawn's roof, was a sheep of his own, by rason that it had his mark tarred on it. Bud, Shawn spoke wid one Roger Divey. An' sure it turned out, in the long run, that poor *Shawn-a-faustha*, was a born-nathril * widout the wit to stale a *thraneen* out of a field, not to talk of a clever, active sheep, that 'ud be runnin' about the field, on his four legs. Anyhow, no one that hard Shawn spakin' could think he ever had an ounce o' sinse in his head. An' so, d'ye see me, Masther Blundell, we proved that the sheep, into the bargain, was a poor fool of a sheep, just like Shawn. That she wouldn't stay in Dunn's fields, but made her way out of it, not knowin' where she was goin', or what she was doin'; an' ran into Shawn's cabin, an' happened to fall upon the bill-hook, an' kilt herself."

During this wily appeal for a heavy retaining fee, George Blundell's thoughts had lapsed into a train of agonized reflection, so that not an echo of Roger's voice intelligibly reached his ear. It was only when the man stopped speaking that he awoke to a sense of the necessity of again addressing him.

"But you have not yet told me the nature of the charge brought against me."

"By vartue o' the oath, d'ye see me, it was asy enough to put off poor Juff Carroll at a nonplush. But, it would give work to a raal counshellor to make the right appear against Connor Kennedy. He is a knowin' ould pet-fox."

"Connor Kennedy? what of him?" demanded George Blundell.

"Why, barrin' there's one to make the right appear against him, it wouldn't be pleasant to kiss the book on the wrong side. And to prove that there was no burglary at his dour an' no takin', forcin',

* Simpleton.

an' carryin' away, *why at arums*, a body that goes by the name of his daughther, Misthress Annie Kennedy, spinisther, d'ye see me?"

George Blundell started up;—

"Heaven and earth! have I understood you?" he cried: "do you assert that Miss Kennedy has been forced from her father's house?"

Roger laughed quietly, incredulously, and peace-makingly, as upon former occasions he had been in the habit of doing, at the first vain attempt to disavow guilt, on the part of undoubted offenders, against the law.

"I say, my young Masther, d'ye see me, is it an *omadhaun** is in my coat?"

"Answer my question!" resumed George Blundell, in a loud passionate voice.

"Whoo!—pillaloo! Sure he wants to frighten us now entirely, like others I have known before him in the same purty condition!" said Roger sneeringly. "And so, my young genteel, you purtend not to know that Miss Annie Kennedy was forced, and taken and carried away, long afore day-break this morning? And may be you won't look at that?" drawing a paper out of his bosom. "And may be you wouldn't see into the bargin, that it's a warrant, made out by his Worship and myself, to make a caption o' you, your own self—for the same?"

George Blundell snatched up the paper; read it frowningly; groaned aloud; flung himself down upon his bed, and, after a moment's silence, muttered, "All is right—proceed in your business."

"Maning to say that you're ready to go before his Worship?" demanded Roger.

"Yes. Exactly that."

"And who's to plade for you, my young squire? Where is the fee to bring you out o' your throuble?"

"Do your duty, and curse you! I have no money to give you:" answered George.

Roger immediately summoned his assistants; they were quickly by his side. At first, the captured man did not seem to heed any thing around him. After a pause, however, he was heard to say, in a low voice, "Father, father!" Then suddenly changed into wild passion, he broke forth, heedless of listeners—"But no—after all your promises, you are not a father to me! Oh, Annie, my

* Fool.

Annie! all this is too horrible! He sprang towards the door, seemingly unconscious of any one's presence: but there found himself interrupted.

"Give way there, at your peril!" he shouted.

Roger touched him on the shoulder, and arrested him as the king's prisoner—Roger's myrmidons closed round him; and when he offered violence, overpowered and secured him. In fact, George Blunt dell behaved too furiously: the swords of the town bailiffs were drawn; and bleeding from many, though slight wounds, he was eventually led away captive.

The rumour of Annie Kennedy's abduction soon spread wide and far. A magistrate of some intelligence—a man, indeed, of *some* "wisdom and discretion," came to the aid of the Mayor of the town, and George Blundell was brought before their Worships.

The proofs of at least participation in the legal offence became satisfactorily established against him. To say nothing of Grace Carroll, Patrick Donnelly swore that George Blundell was one of those who had bound and gagged him. And the circumstances of his stealthy entry into his lodgings about day-break; the finding the loose outside coat, the slouched hat, and the mask upon the chair in his bed-room; and last, though not least, his having gone to bed without fully undressing, together with the soils upon the clothes he had slept in, formed strong corroborative testimony.—Neither did any one forget that in just such a coat, hat, and mask, each of the abductors had entered the premises of Connor Kennedy.

George Blundell vainly tried to shatter or shake the chain of evidence wound around him. Indeed, he met legal proofs with nothing but angry or impassioned assertions. He proclaimed his innocence; he clamoured to be set free, vehemently and absurdly pledging life and honour—and swearing to the pledge by the name of God—that Annie Kennedy should quickly be restored to her guardian, were she to be found on the face of the earth. The directing magistrate naturally regarded all this but as a boyish *ruse* to escape the consequences which hung over the prisoner's head, scornfully expressing his wonder at the silliness, which would expect, or even seem to expect, that such proposals should be complied with.

Mr. Connor Kennedy was present during the investigation. He sat alone and apart, still shedding tears, rocking his person to and fro, and not uttering a word. George Blundell fixed his eye upon him; appealed to him for protection or confidence, and asked him to become legal security for his re-appearance, provided he were

allowed to issue forth on his quixotic expedition for the recovery of Annie. But Mr. Kennedy would not raise up his eyes, and, in addition to his former gesticulation, only clasped his hands together. In fact, George Blundell was fully committed to prison.

CHAPTER XV.

For a good distance, the way taken by Annie Kennedy, or rather by her self-elected guardians, was a long, rough, by-road; then, much to her personal relief, though she cared little about it, the car, after rolling over soft turf, stopped. A solitary mud cabin, one of those inhabited by the very poorest of the peasantry, was before her: she was lifted down from her chariot of little ease, and carried through its low door-way into the interior apartment; two miserable chambers forming the whole of the space, which its tattered, thatched roof covered.

Here was a single rush-candle; the earthen floor was uneven and unswept; ths mud-walls were damp and bare; rafters and wattles, blackened by smoke, canopied the roof; and the only furniture consisted of two ricketty, rush-bottomed chairs, and a bedstead to match.

Her conductors thrust her into the cheerless place, and then retired, securing the door upon her as well as it permitted. For a moment she stood in the middle of the floor, still pinioned and gagged. A woman, wrinkled, and of disagreeable countenance, entered, and, with a hand somewhat less rough than those which had last ministered about the girl's person, restored her to the use of her limbs and her tongue.

Could horror fitly be expressed by a young and lovely face and form, Annie Kennedy might be taken as a personification of it, as, after glaring fearfully around, her eyes finally fastened on those of her new attendant.

"Are you of my own sex?" she asked, with a beseeching, hopeless tremour of look and manner.

"You ax me that," answered the woman, with somewhat of sorrow in her tone, "because the wrinkles are on my face, and because its features are hard-grained and forbiddin'. But there was a time when my cheek was smooth and rosy, my eye bright and

good-humoured, my lip red and my foot light. Then I was blithe, and used to sing and laugh, as the others did, when we all went out a-Maying. But I am changed now;—changed before my time; —wrinkled before my time. Ay, and I know that something else is come into my face, too, that was not in it at first. And although I have strength enough to run, I can't do it: the heart weighs me down; it is as heavy as lead; and it is, ochone! rotten with sin."

"But still it is a woman's heart? It has still something of a woman's nature left in it," the girl cried, touched, spite of her personal alarms, by the wretch's words and manner, and thence deriving some hope for herself.

"Not a bit, I fear, not a bit! I am a devil on the face of the earth, hastening on to my grave, and afeard of the world to come."

"You have been sinful," continued Annie, touching, though hesitatingly, the wretch's shrinking shoulder, "you have been sinful, and sin has brought you sorrow?"

"Worse than sorrow, it has brought me, child: worse than sorrow, it has brought me. It has brought me the untimely wrinkles, and the despair."

"Then save a fellow-creature from sin, from sorrow, and from despair, such as you now know and feel!" pleaded Annie. "Were you the most sinful being that ever outraged Heaven, Heaven is good! One act of Christian charity, such as I implore at your hands, may bring upon your soul the grace of repentance, and then the grace of a forgiving God! Save me! You are still a woman—Save me!"

"Spake lower," hoarsely whispered the poor creature, "and mind what you spake at all. There is a guard upon the dour."

"Tell me, good woman! Oh! tell me one thing at least! in whose power am I?"

"In the power of one that never yet used his power mercifully."

"The man who is called the strange Man of the Inch?"

"Yes, asthore. It's in his hands you are."

"Oh God! oh God! Oh! if there is but a drop of compassion in you, let it melt and flow for me, then! Oh woman! good, good woman, whatever is in the power of human gratitude to do, I will do for you in return! You say you have been sinful, and that you are unhappy. I will take you to my very bosom; I will call you my friend, my deliverer, my earthly saviour! I will," she went on rapidly—"humbly depending on Him for help—I will teach you to hope in God! I will pour the balm of hope, and, as far as I know how, of repentance, upon the canker of sin, that you

say is eating away your heart! Yes, by my prayers, I will endeavour to reconcile you with Heaven; while we live together in this world, I will be the consoler, and—for Providence has given me the means to do it—the cherisher of your earthly lot! Yes, yes! and I will soothe your death-bed, when God calls you: I will whisper into your dying ear the promise of that mercy, from your God, which I now kneel to beg of you for myself!"

The woman clasped her fingers in each other, crossed her hands over her forehead and eyes, and sobbed.

"Oh, I see it!" pursued Annie, "compassion for a woman in misery is yet in your nature! You will—you will—be my friend and preserver!"

"Whist!" said the wretch, as she hastily uncovered her face. Tears, newly struck out of the rock—her own heart—trickled through furrows made by the wrinkles that she had truly called untimely. As she raised her skinny finger to claim attention, her eyes fixed kindly, humanely, and, indeed, almost with the expression of the womanly protection for which Annie had pleaded, upon her unhappy young prisoner.

"Yes, the hour of your thrial is come! But, be of stout heart; lift up your sperrits, and pray the good God you believe in!"—

The woman stopped abruptly, and turned her eyes towards the creaking door, It was flung open, and the bug-bear of our tale stood within its threshold.

"The time is come to use the paper that the Mayor of Wind-gap gave you," whispered the woman suddenly.

"Retire!" said the strange Man of the Inch, in a voice of stern and established authority. The miserable individual he addressed did not seem to have the slightest power of daring to disobey his command. She quickly passed him, and left the apartment. He closed the door.

After the whispered hint of her late attendant, Annie recollected that, since the day—not very long ago, indeed—upon which Maurteen Maher had given her the document in question, she had taken care to keep it about her person. Now, while her heart throbbed almost to bursting, and while her eye remained as if spell bound upon the face of the abhorred individual with whom she found herself alone, she confusedly searched for it. But, in her great agitation, as also in her womanly disinclination to manifest her actions, the poor girl's trembling fingers made a useless attempt.

Her companion turned round and approached her. As he advanced, she shrank away, step by step.

"Now, beautiful Annie, do not shun me in this way," he said, whether in a tone of conciliation or of irony, it must have been an experienced and a nice ear which could have judged. "This is certainly not a very elegant place to pay my respects to you in; but it is by necessity, not by choice, that I meet you under its lowly roof. There was no admission for me in your own house; I would not take the liberty of inviting you to mine, as it is a bachelor establishment. Therefore, sweet one, we meet upon the first neutral ground nearest at hand. No matter where, since I at last enjoy the bliss of speaking with you;—of declaring to you how much I have suffered in the want of such an opportunity, since the first blessed day my eyes rested upon you. Or, indeed, as the good people about here say, my *one* eye,—though, perhaps, if it were necessary, I could shew for your satisfaction, a pair of them, rather good ones too. And so, my darling little Annie ——"

"Man!" interrupted the girl desperately, "dreadful, though, let me tell you, not *now* dreaded, man! dare not to come near me, if you would not trample upon my corpse!" Her trembling hands were still moving rapidly about her person.

"Tut! tut! my pretty queen! 'Tis a sin in you, a mortal sin, to talk so. Leave death to old age and deformity, but speak of living, and of living only for happiness, while your young, soft bloom is upon you. Enchanting little Annie! I am not the scarecrow you have been used to think me. Come, I can woo with smiles, if so you wish it, as gently as any petit mâitre." He seized her hand, and rudely drawing her towards him, encircled her with his arm. A scream of direst agony and disgust burst from her.

"Be calm, sweet girl, be calm! *I* do not intend to be rough, or offensive. There, sit you down, and do not tremble so." Rather gently, for him, he placed her upon one of the ricketty chairs, and took the other himself, at some distance from her.

Annie glared at him, her eyes watching him with frenzied dread, while both her hands grasped the frail seat, as if it could have been a protection to her.

"Yes, yes, I see it!" he said, modulating his tone even to music, and evidently half amused at her very palpable disgust and dread: "they have been frightening you with absurd stories of me, my little girl. I told you as much at our first interview.—Oh, to be sure, the old gabblers have put it into your pretty head, that the good, respectable Devil, (I always speak deferentially of every body, 'tis a safe habit,) and myself have been 'hail-fellows, well met.' Yet, Faith! I don't recollect the exact spot of ground, or the exact ship,

or even the little drinking parlour, in which we have ever yet sat down together. One thing, however, I do frankly admit.—I am, by nature, the adorer, the slave, the humblest, the most abject slave of woman's beauty. It ever has ruled, it now does, and it ever must rule my lot on earth. Aye, and if there be another, and a happier, and a pleasanter world to come, in that other, too. Come, dearest Annie, and I will call you sensible Annie, into the bargain, because I know every body gives you a character for understanding and intellect, beyond your years; but, come! As one of the most fearful things about me, have they not told you that one-half of my visage is demonically frightful? of a certain mark upon this cheek, which you have not yet seen? Beautiful Annie, need I tell you, that I can refute all their gossip, as I now do their nursery tales—upon *this* score. Look, my little girl; do look at me, and see if the mark of the Devil's claw be really visible to your maiden eye."

There was a smile of male coquetry upon the now unclouded face of the strange Man, as he fully unveiled his features: nor was the smile wanting in stern fascination. Gashes certainly appeared, though at present cicatrized, upon his hitherto disguised cheek; but none that could not be accounted for, by fair encounter on the battle-field, nor reconciled with a general impression of manly beauty. At a somewhat younger age, and without a wound, the strange Man's countenance must have been strikingly handsome. As he playfully twitched off his black handkerchief, the poor girl's nerves quivered almost to madness. So confused and enervated was her state of mind, that Grace Carroll's late anecdotes had real power over it; and she could not help expecting to see, upon the half of his face hitherto shut up, (like an awkward wing of an old house, that is not to be let with the rest of the premises,) the fearful marks which her poor maid, nay, which even the strange Man himself had hinted, might be found stamped upon it. All feelings are, in their strength, relative; and when, on looking timidly at the face before her, she discovered that there was nothing very terrible in the appearance or expression of the whole of the strange Man's features, she certainly experienced a little relief.

"Well, Annie, after all they say, am I, or am I not, a proper man enough?" And as he smilingly said this he again approached her; for even the slight change in her sensations did not escape his practised observation.

But anew her agonies returned; nay, became augmented. Her hands suddenly ceased their rapid and nervous search, and she

clasped them tightly together, as, in deep despair, she muttered to herself—

"Gone, gone, gone—and my last hope with it!"

"What is gone? What do you mean by that pretty phrase, my sweet Annie?" He still moved his chair; she had pushed her's close to the wall.

The smile and glance, accompanying these words, produced through the poor girl's frame that spasmodic affection of disgust, which might have been inspired by the sudden and near appearance of a loathsome reptile.

"Have mercy on me!" she cried, dropping upon her knees, and crouching before him.

"The rather do I ask *you* to have pity on *me*," he answered, stooping to lift her up. She sprang to her feet from the touch, screaming forth wildly:—

"Touch me not, villain—touch me not!—I am not weak nor unprotected, although but a girl, and alone with you.—Heaven is my strength and my protector—and will be your punisher!"—Again she shrank away as far as she could from him. The strange Man's softness changed to swift mockery—indeed, all through there had been beneath it an under-current of the same.

"Ha! ha!" he scoffed, "by the rood, I think I am stepping back into my boyhood, when it used to be my silly creed that smiles and tears alone, to say nothing of knee-bending, were a woman's persuaders.—Ha! ha!—vanity, vanity, oh! dear vanity! thou art the last foible to abandon us!—Yes, some folly whispered to me that, forsooth, I ought to try and coax you into good humour. Well, no matter!—but, as the old saying goes—'The old fool is worse than any.' So, once more we change tack, my brisk little beauty. By Heavens! I love to grapple, either in war, or in love, with whatever promises, by a good, courageous struggle, to make victory the sweeter!—Up with speaking trumpet, first, however, before broadsides and hangers; and so, listen to me, Annie Kennedy—First, I love you;—aye, more than ever I did girl or woman,—excepting *one* girl, a long time ago, who can now make no question between us. Or, at least, no question to my disadvantage. But that is not all—There is yet another motive which urges me to sue you thus. Your father and myself were, once upon a time, very dear friends, and"—

"Oh God!" interrupted Annie, "my father and you friends?—How, then,"—and she could utter no more.

"How, then, does it follow, you would ask, that I see any reason

to wish to make his daughter, also, my dear friend—aye, and upon my own terms?—I have taken the question from your own sweet lips: thus do I answer it. Annie Kennedy, it is exactly because your father and I were such very dear friends that your father's daughter is here to-night."

"If—you knew him so well, who was my father?" Annie panted, seeking rather to prolong a subject that kept her persecutor from her—even a few moments—rather than from any other motive.

"Who was your father?—Who *is*, you mean?—Why, what silly question is this?—Who but the man who, very naturally, has brought you up; the man you live with; the man from whose house I have entrapped you hither."

"He is not!—I know he is not!—You but invent the falsehood for some purpose of your own!"

"Not I, forsooth!" I am sure of what I say. Connor Kennedy *is* your father. Though so closely was it his practice to keep his little amusements, that neither I nor any one else can hint to you who your mother may have been. Ay, and that same Connor Kennedy once was the dear friend I have spoken about! A reptile!"—continued the strange Man, suddenly bursting into passion, and stamping on the clay floor, while his brows became knitted into a black frown, his cheeks pale, his eyes flashing, his lips fiercely curving, almost frothing—"A reptile!—First, a low, mean, crawling reptile—then, a slimy, wriggling, slippery, evading reptile—lastly, an ungrateful, base, dastardly reptile! Who, while he was nurtured *here*—here on my heart—and while I slept—trustingly, happily slept—stung me, right over that very heart—ay, shot and spat his own very venom into it, till its core and veins became poisoned—poisoned into a circulation of liquid, running fire—poisoned into rage—into madness—into detestation of its fellow-hearts—until at length, it can feel no joy but of that revenge upon him, in something like the fashion of wrong for wrong—measure for measure."

He strode up and down the small apartment, as might a yet untamed tiger in his new cage. Annie was horrified into absolute silence. He suddenly stopped and looked upon her: his features changed into a different, though a not less repulsive, expression, as he went on—

"You have heard me, Annie Kennedy!—Your father was that viper to me! After heaping kindness upon his head—and—idiot that I was!—casting my heart's affection upon the heap—he robbed me—meanly, treacherously robbed me of the woman whom, in early youth, I loved better than my own soul—and who, had he

permitted her to become mine, might have swayed and softened that soul into something good among men—perhaps saved it for a hereafter!—But tush, tush!—no matter now!—We are quits at last!—You, girl, stand before me—*his* daughter—Connor Kennedy's daughter!—Ay, and by Heaven, full as beautiful, and I believe as pure, as her of whom he plundered me!"

The girl's shrieks arose in irrepressible agony and terror.

"The paper! the paper"—whispered a voice close at her ear. Despairing and agonized as she was, Annie could, with a glance, ascertain that the voice came through a chink in the slight and frail wall, or rather partition, at her back. "God help me! I have it not!"—she answered, aloud.—And then her poor shrieks continued, piercing up higher and higher. The ruffian held her in his grasp. Her delicate attire became discomposed; her neck despoiled of its fragile covering. By a touch of her own quivering hands, she ascertained this fact: and, in her glance downwards, further discovered a sealed paper, half-protruding from beneath her corset.—One moment's strength she was able to summon up:—nerved by it, she hurled her assaulter some distance from her;—snatched the now fully recognised document from its hiding place; stretched it forward to him at arm's length; and, panting and gasping her words, said—

"Here—read this—it is for you!"

Surprised, he plucked it from her hand. She crossed her arms over her bosom, and, sinking against the wall, stood tremblingly, with distended eyes and parted lips, watching him. It has been noticed that there was but one feeble taper in the miserable apartment. To this he went; broke the heavy and rude seal of the letter addressed to him, and began to peruse it.

Annie's eyes devoured his movements, and the expression of his features. The talisman was in his hand!—For good or for evil to her?—She saw him start—frown—change colour:—look amazed and baffled—angry and tamed—incredulous and shaken. Twice he read the writing, then shouted out furiously——"A lie!—a lie, by the Heaven!—Who gave you this?"—springing back, and scowling upon her.

She was about to pronounce her old friend's name. But although Maurteen Maher had not formally bound her to secrecy—nay, although, in a jocose way, he had told her to give his compliments, with the letter, to the strange Man—still, a generous fear of evil result to him, at the hands of so desperate a character, checked her tongue, and she faltered that she would not reveal who was the writer.

"What!—refuse to yield up the auther of this annoying falsehood!—Do you not dread my vengeance?"

"No! I dread you, now, in nothing!"—she boldly answered.—"For, attempt to deny it, as you may—the paper tells you truth—and you know it does—and I am safe!—And I defy you!"——And the exhausted girl sank down at last.

The ferocious, as well as strange Man, after looking at her, scrutinizingly, and, finally, with somewhat of real kindness, seemed moved at least, by her words and manner,—if indeed, they had not convinced him of the assertions of Maurteen Maher's epistle. He muttered aside—

"By the eternal word! That speech was not like the daughter of Connor Kennedy and some unknown obscure peasant—"

He placed his hand upon a chair; raised it up slowly; put it down again, in the middle of the floor. Upon it he seated himself, his hand shanging by his side; continuing to gaze attentively, if not respectfully, at Annie.

She still crouched upon the ground: powerless, but not afraid, before him: while her white arms were still closely folded over her neck. After a pause, he arose; pushed open the crazy door, and called loudly into the other apartment—"A glass of water here!"

Immediately Annie's late attendant re-entered, with the beverage he had demanded. "Ask that young lady to taste it," he continued: "and, hark ye, place her cloak round her shoulders, and seat her as comfortably as you can upon the bed-side."

"I will sit up," said the girl, "if I can. But not if you approach me."

"Do not fear me. I will not torch you now," he answered, in a tone which she could not understand, but which, nevertheless, filled her with confidence.

With the assistance of the woman, she was, however, soon disposed of at her ease, comparatively speaking.

"Leave us again"—commanded the strange Man: as before, his vassal hurried out of the room.

"Let her stay—let her stay!" petitioned Annie.

"No, if you please. For I now wish to interchange a word with you, which no one must overhear. She is, however, outside this door, and a loud sound of your voice may call her.—Be calm, therefore, I entreat you;—and when I do entreat you, be assured you may be calm.—You told me, a while ago, that you were not Connor Kennedy's child. What grounds had you for saying that?"

"His own assertions," answered she—"which I take as the truth, sooner than those of any other living creature."

"Hum—that is nothing;—nothing at all. Has he not told you who really are your parents?"

"No; I know not, from any source of information, who are my father and mother. But I am sure that Connor Kennedy is not my father—and I am also sure that if you knew my father, as you assert, you must have known my mother too. Therefore, this may give us both information on the subject."

Still nervously trembling she undid from her neck the ribbon which sustained the miniature-portraits of which mention has before been made, and handed the locket to him.

Again he hurried to the taper; again he became passionately and wildly affected. After some time asked her, in a much subdued tone—"And from whose hand did you receive this?"

"From my mother's—on her dying bed."

"You speak the holy truth, now?"

"I do—to the utmost of my belief and knowledge."

"Well, that is enough—that must do"—He again fixed his eyes upon the locket, thoughtfully and wonderingly, turing it from side to side.—He paused—he sighed—he smiled—he laughed.—He rose up deliberately, muttering—"a strange, strange world."

"Girl, I am cheated out of my revenge for the present;" he said. Though, perhaps, not quite that, neither. Let us not conclude too hastily; we will look into this affair. And even if my dear revenge does escape me in this shape, there may be another road to an old,—a long-hoped object."

Annie was left alone—she had scarce leisure to return thanks to Heaven when the old woman reappeared before her.

"The paper makes you easy for the present"—she said—"God grant that things may turn up so as to keep us both quiet for the time to come!"

Tears were again in the unhappy creature's eyes. Annie threw her arms impulsively round her neck—laid her head upon her sinful shoulder, and cried plentifully over the beatings of her sinful heart.

CHAPTER XVI.

Even upon occasions almost common-place to other men, George Blundell was the creature of passion. It will not therefore be wondered at, that in his present situation, he felt fearfully affected.

The world had scarcely yet tamed down, in the slightest degree, his youthful impulses. His love for Annie, and her love for him, had become the very essence of his existence.

It would therefore be difficult to describe him in his present situation.

A night and part of a day passed on, and from his first frantic despair he sank into a gloomy, brooding, idle moroseness. Food had been offered to him, but he did not even think of it. The turnkey had appeared, and disappeared, and no word escaped his lips, nor had sleep relieved him for one instant.

It was again noon. The turnkey entered; placed a letter in his hands; and, making a sign of caution, quitted the cell.

George Blundell glanced at the superscription; and he was instantly erect, his face flushed, his hand trembling. With dried and white lips, he hastily ran over the epistle.

"What!" he cried, "what is this? am I really the maniac wretch I have shuddered to think I might become? Have I not striven to cool down my boiling blood, and to still my throbbing temples? Or have my eyes lost their power of vision? No; it is a letter, and in her hand-writing. Well; I may have misunderstood its meaning. I have been in this place for some time, without sleep or food, and perhaps am not now able to see or to understand rightly: let me try and man myself, and then read it again."

He did so; it began;

"I am compelled to write to you by an authority which I must not gainsay—"

"Compelled to write to me? And was compulsion necessary, Annie? By an authority you must not gainsay? What authority? Hah! she had prefixed to the word "authority" the term "dear," and then blotted it out. There is mystery in this. But let me read on"—

"And I write for the purpose of informing you that you are no longer to think of me as you have done; that, by all and every means in your power, you must expel from your heart its love for me. If I am to judge by the struggle in my own bosom, this will be a difficult task for you: yet you are called upon to attempt it; nay, to achieve it. In explanation, I am permitted only to say, that I never can be your wife; that an unpassable barrier has been suddenly placed between us. Whatever may be the consequences, I will add that I am very, very miserable in the new circumstances which surround me. Oh, George! is it not a terrible thing to feel

repugnance where one is called on to bestow affection—where, indeed, it is one's duty to bestow it? For further satisfaction on this unhappy subject, I can but refer you to him who *was* my guardian—Mr. Connor Kennedy. Farewell. Farewell.

"ANNIE."

Spite of continued interruptions on the part of George Blundell, we have given the remainder of this letter in an unbroken form to the reader. The nature of his interruptions will be easily guessed at, though we do not define them. We shall only narrate certain conclusions at which the young man's mind jumped, after fully comprehending, as he thought, the words which had been written to him.

A barrier? One that he could not pass? Who dared to erect it? Who dared to say that he was unable to over-leap any barrier, no matter what in nature, which the craft, or the cunning, or the skill, or the malice, or the villany of man was capable of building up between him and his soul's idol? Tush!—Fools or scoundrels were but imposing on her fears, or her judgment.

But stay, he would try to understand this mysterious letter farther.—Again, what was the nature of the barrier it spoke of? She could never be his wife. Why? The hot-brained boy suddenly felt that he comprehended the meaning of that assertion. Annie Kennedy could never be his wife, only because she had become, or was about to become, the wife of another! Of what other? His father? No! Evil as was the nature of that father, a thought so horrible could not be entertained. "I refer you to him *who was* my guardian." *Who was* my guardian! How had he ceased to be her guardian? "How," the boy cried, "but by changing his position towards her;—how, but by becoming her husband! Oh! I thank God for that thought. Now my hand can fall—unstained by a parent's blood—upon the head of the true hypocrite, and villain. Blood! did I say blood? No, not that. But I will question him; I will question him! And were he coiled up tenfold in his duplicity, he must give plain answers to an outraged and most miserable creature!"

George Blundell sprang to the door of his cell; soon reminded that he was a prisoner, he again fell upon his straw, exhausted and uttering cries of rage and despair.

For many hours the wretched boy lay as still as if life had quitted him, his blood-shot eyes vaguely fixed on vacancy. The turnkey again entered. He suddenly started up and demanded who had been

the bearer of the letter? The man could, or would, only answer that it had been delivered at the gaol door by a person unknown to him. A bribe induced him, however, not only to furnish his prisoner with writing materials, but also to engage to have conveyed to its destination a letter which the impatient prisoner proposed immediately to write.

The following were the contents of this letter:

"I presume, sir, it is not without your knowledge that I received to-day a note from Annie; from her who was to have been *my* Annie; mine! Now she informs me that she never can be my wife; for that 'there is an unpassable barrier suddenly placed between us.' She instructs me to apply to you for a full explanation of her strange and obscure words. You know well, for it must have been by your contrivance that your servant gave the false testimony of which I am momentarily the victim;—you know well I cannot wait upon you; and that, therefore, my demand for an explanation must, for the present, confine itself to writing. But I caution you not to dally or trifle with me. No one is better aware than yourself how unjustly I am detained here. And, Mr. Kennedy, as surely as I am an innocent man, I shall speedily be free again. Then, sir, we can meet face to face, should your refusal to satisfy me at present make necessary so dangerous an interview.—Your's, as you may deserve of me,

"GEORGE BLUNDELL."

In vain did the writer of this spirited epistle turn his eye to the prison door, for hours and hours after he had sent it away, in expectation of an answer. Mr. Kennedy vouchsafed no reply, either personally or in writing. George Blundell raged and foamed, and stamped, and threatened: still to no purpose. Another sleepless, horrible night passed over his head:—another wretched morning half-dawned upon him through the single iron-grated window of his cell. About noon his usual attendant reappeared, placed a packet in his hand, and at once retired. George Blundell eagerly tore it open. It contained a very small saw, a file, a little bottle of oil. and a note without signature or direction, and certainly not in Mr. Kennedy's hand-writing.

"If you desire to learn tidings of Annie Kennedy, lose no time in availing yourself of the means of escape herewith afforded. With the file and saw cut away three of the bars of your prison window:

be sure to use the oil freely; it will prevent noise, and facilitate your work. Go on steadily and cautiously, and you need fear no interruption. If, by the time your door is secured for the night, you have succeeded, remove the bars. You will find a ladder to the window, on the outside; descend it at once; but take care not to do so before the hour already specified. At the foot of the ladder you will meet a person awaiting you. Accost him not; do not utter a whisper; but follow him silently, and he will lead you to one who can fully satisfy you on all the points you at present want to have cleared up."

Carefully, very carefully, notwithstanding the feverish state of his mind and body, did George Blundell follow these directions of his unknown but practical friend. With might and main he worked, and yet so stealthily that he could scarce have disturbed a mouse in his cell. Before the last nightly visit had been paid to him, his task was done; the bars being cut through, at either side, and only artificially retained in their places. When his cell door was closed upon him, he quickly removed those previously formidable obstacles between him and liberty. At a glance he saw the promised ladder: at another, though dimly seen in the dark, the promised figure of a man, at its foot. Next instant he was descending from the window; and the next was in a narrow lane which skirted the rear of the gaol. The person who had been waiting for him stood at some distance, closely muffled up, and making signs to him to follow. Without speaking a word George Blundell pursued the steps of his dumb guide, who immediately began to walk rapidly away. But before leaving the spot, he observed two other men steal towards the ladder, lower it, and hurry off with it in an opposite direction.

He treaded, after his conductor, the least frequented streets which, in that quarter of the town, led to the suburbs. They then made a wide circuit of the environs, and, at length, without passing through the city, stopped in an obscure street, at the side of it which was opposite to, and most remote from, the prison. The man gave a single and a cautious knock at the door of a mean-looking house; it was instantly opened. A dull lamp lighted the staircase. The guide motioned to George Blundell to ascend. He did so, and rapidly entered a room at their head. He looked around; he was alone; but he heard a heavy foot coming up after him. In a few seconds, his flashing and questioning eyes fixed upon the person of the strange Man of the Inch.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE youth started back, confounded—"So, you are your own man again," observed his companion, smiling dryly.

"And I owe my liberation to you—Father?"

"To be sure you do. Who else but a near friend would go to any trouble about you?"

"You wrote the note, and sent me the things that accompanied it?" again asked George, with a painful motive for his curiosity.

"I—I—I!—And was not that said note to the purpose? Didn't it understand business?" said the strange Man, with a strange laugh.

"May I enquire who gave you the very useful information it contained? The confidant of your plot for my escape, I suppose? The person who awaited me at the ladder's foot?"

"Do not speak 'of the *ladder's foot*,' my boy; 'tis an awkward expression. But you are right in one thing, and wrong in another; or rather you are right and wrong together. I consulted with nobody—nor was it necessary I should do so—upon the means of getting you out of that little, high, iron-barred window———You foolish cub!—do you think nobody ever cut through an iron-bar, before this evening? As to the man who led you from that place to this, he is here with you now; in truth, I only shunned the eyes of the persons of this house, to take off my disguise before I would come up to you. Because, although they are particularly in my confidence—and a good many others, too, along with them,—I don't want to make a bother about every thing."

"So then," said George, "you know all about the file, and saw, and oil, from your own experience?"

"Certainly, my lad. And do you, at this moment, wish that I had never known any thing about them?"

George Blundell remained for some time thoughtful. Without his observation, the strange Man had closely watched him, and now he said in his most softened tone—

"I suppose you have had suspicions of me, George?"

"Yes," answered George, deeply and hoarsely—"Yes, I have had suspicions of you;—horrid, hellish suspicions!"

"You need not say it so vehemently. Yes, I have been told as much;—people have hinted all that to me. Yes; a day or two ago, they might have convinced you I had something to do with the abduction of Miss Annie Kennedy."

"It is not you who have forced her away, then?"

"How could I, boy? Listen to me—I will be perfectly candid with you. Annie certainly was borrowed, a few evenings since, from the house of her nominal guardian. But, if *I* had taken her away, why should I have coaxed you out of your nice little crib, merely that we should meet here, face to face, and that I should be ready to answer any of your questions about her?"

"I do not see why you should have done so," replied George "But before we go any further, answer me one other question—Father and son, as we sit here together,—answer me one other question!—will you, will you?"

"Pooh—calm yourself—to be sure I will. What is it?"

"You knew nothing *whatever* of the violence committed on Annie Kennedy, before it occurred?"

The laugh which escaped George Blundell's companion was so loud, so long, and yet so seemingly innocent, that it at once startled and confounded—if it did not convince—his methodical catechist.

"Swear to it by Heaven!" he cried fiercely.

"I swear to it by Heaven!" answered his unmoved associate.

"And swear to it by Hell!"—

"Oh—that is still more easy; so I swear to it by Hell; as also by the pleasant places that surround that port; banks, rivers, shoals, sands, caves, and so forth; and all the other little things that make an ugly harbour seem agreeable to the eye."

"But you have sworn solemnly?"

"I have, very solemnly. Do you wish me to swear by anything else? Ha, ha, ha!"

"I must be contented, I suppose, with your declaration. Well; you have set me free; and I thank you. And you have done me that service, too, under a promise of satisfying me upon all the points connected with Annie, which I want to have cleared up. First, then. With whom am I to reckon for the outrage committed upon her?—Can you point your finger distinctly to the man?"

"I can, easily."

"Name him, then!" cried George Blundell, starting up, fiercely.

"Mr. Connor Kennedy."

"Ha!—My surmises were not unfounded!"

"And,—now,—little Annie's husband!" continued the strange Man, smiling quietly.

"The villain!—the deep, hypocritical villain!"

"Ah! yes, indeed. You may well call him that."

"So!" continued George, striding like a madman about the

room. "I read aright, then, the meaning of her letter to me, the other day. This *was*—*this is* the unpassable barrier, so suddenly placed between us!"

"Her letter to you the other day?—You received one from her, then, since you were betrayed to prison by that man?"

"I have—here it is," answered George, snatching it from his pocket.

"May I read it?"

George handed it to him. He perused it attentively.

"Why, aye; this certainly was enough to make you come to the true conclusion. Aye, aye; 'he who *was* my guardian.' Any one may complete the sentence by adding, And who is my husband."

"Sir," cried George, "before I take a step—and a serious one, give me the fullest proof that Kennedy and Annie are, at present, man and wife."

"Suppose I could not adduce stronger proof than this very letter which you have yourself just handed to me, would it not be sufficient?—Proof, positive, however, I can and will give you; more of that anon. First, let us see if we understand each other as to the character and nature of the man you are called upon to reckon with—You have heard, I presume, that, though now rich, he once was poor—abjectly poor—that the riches he now possesses are the rightful property of the very person who rescued him from his low estate. That with the most unutterable ingratitude, and with the most devilish duplicity, he disinherited his early benefactor, who loved him?"

George Blundell gloomily nodded assent.

"Well; as we pass along, we may reason a little upon this Mr. Connor Kennedy. Have you any good grounds for being sure that, at about forty, he is not the same kind of man he was about twenty? That he is now capable of deceiving *you*, in something of the same way, though not half so foully, as he once deceived the patron and cherisher of his youth?"

"No—I have no such grounds."

"What has been your own opinion of him, during your acquaintance with him?—Favourable or unfavourable?"

"Unfavourable! Even in the teeth of his ward's assurances, I always disliked his manners, his language, and his appearance; and suspected his principles."

"You might have made worse guesses than those. Very good. Let us go on, coolly.—You waited on Connor Kennedy the other

day—or you met him in his house, I believe, though you had not wished to see him: you pleaded hard for an interview with Annie. How did he act towards you on that occasion?"

"With cunning and want of candour!—First, he would have evaded my question altogether, then he left the room, promising to use his influence with her to come down to me. At last I got a message importing that she would not come down to me, in consequence of his prohibition. Ay! I well remember it."

"Good again. After that, however, you did see her, and became reconciled with her. Almost immediately, her abduction followed. To put you out of the way, a trumpery charge of being concerned in that abduction was made against you;—and upon it—mainly supported by one of his own warrants, mark you—you were sent to the common gaol, from which I have just released you. Couple all these facts with Annie's letter to you, and do you longer require proofs of the present real state of the case? Proofs, in fact, of my assertion that Connor Kennedy is now the husband of the woman who had sworn to wed no man but yourself!"

"No!" groaned George Blundell; "it is as clear as the daylight."

"Still a little step farther. You are referred I see, by this letter, to an explanation with your old friend, Mr. Kennedy. Have you demanded it?"

"I have! I have," replied George, his impatience and fury every moment increasing.

"Was it quite a satisfactory explanation?"

"Hell and earth! do not mock at me! The villain has returned no answer of any kind!"

"There, again. But observe the innocence of the world's ways, shown by the artless young creature who wrote you this letter. His dupe and his victim, by means and wiles which, as yet, we do not even guess at, she is still simple-hearted enough to think that the man who has deceived you both, and cast you into a dungeon, whence he could dream of your departure only by the road to the gallows—that *he*—that such a man—would stand before your face, and give you a fair and full account of the machinery by which he robbed you of your young and beautiful, and accomplished, and pure-minded Annie!"

George Blundell was now walking slowly up and down the apartment, his brows dragging down over his burning eyes, his hands clenched, his teeth sunk into his bleeding lip.

"I knew that man, of old—that Connor Kennedy," pursued his companion, speaking in a low, deliberate manner.

George Blundell suddenly stopped, and looked intently at him.

"Yes, George, my son; I knew him well, more than twenty years ago. Attend to me, boy. You are now about to hear more of me than you have yet become acquainted with: my story may help to enlighten you still more upon the steps you ought to take in your present great and unmerited misfortunes. Attend to me.

"I have already told you that I left my native country in my youth; that I was shipwrecked, and cast naked, friendless, and penniless, on a far-off coast. And that afterwards I became a merchant, and realized wealth by many years of profitable traffic. In this latter statement, however, I did not rightly instruct you, and for the following reasons. At the first meeting between us, which you are capable of remembering, I found you a brave, bold boy, and I did not wish, by giving you a real account of my path to fortune, to arouse, perhaps, your boyish wish to follow in my steps. Although most unfortunate and most injured, and the world would add, no strict honourer of some of its laws, I would not hold out my life as an example to you. No. I wished you to remain in your native land, honoured, respected, and happy. You are already aware that my first visit to Ireland, after my shipwreck, was for the purpose of seeking you out, and providing for the nurture of your infancy and your childhood; and—"

"Stop, father—" said George Blundell. "Is your real name that which you at present assume, and have given to me?"

"You anticipate me but by a little," answered the strange Man of the Inch. "I had nearly come to that very point; I will therefore answer you distinctly. My name is Henry Stokesbury, not Philip Blundell."

"Impossible! he perished at sea! so at least those said who have ever mentioned that unhappy man to me."

"It is not impossible, George. It is true. I am the man. Need I therefore repeat to you that, twenty years ago, I knew your Connor Kennedy, well?"

"No, indeed," answered George. "Although but vaguely acquainted with his story and your's, it has ever been my impression that you met with very unworthy treatment at his hands."

"Unworthy treatment!" scoffed the narrator, with one of his terrible laughs. "You use charitable language, George, towards the destroyer of your father. And you are but vaguely acquainted, you say, with our joint story? Well—a few words will soon supply that deficiency."

As he proceeded in his narration, Henry Stokesbury, whenever

the recollection of his own early injuries wrought upon his fiery nature, seemed almost hurried into personal contact with the individual, and the circumstances to which he chiefly alluded: his tone and actions became fearfully impetuous; his eyes flashed, his lips foamed. During other parts of the recital his manner and himself seemed to change, on the contrary, into something of the freshness of youthful feeling; as if, indeed, feeling had still been fresh within him. Again, when it was his object to impress something upon his listener, he would become cool and effective; giving expression to that mingled craft and passion which, perhaps, his life's course had interwoven in his character.

"George," he said, "I can commiserate your feelings and sufferings. Even as you feel and suffer, I have felt and suffered: even as you have been wronged, cajoled, and outraged, so have I been. Nay, in almost the same circumstances, and by the same man. You love your Annie. At your age I loved a creature at least her equal. Oh!—Mary was, indeed, formed to soften the turbulent spirit of man, as does a night in June, when the air is still, and even June's soft breezes are nestling in the closed cup of the blossom? Oh! yes—yes—I loved you, Mary!—gnarled as I am, the passion is in my heart's core to this day. And, George, I loved my mother, too—my good mother! and with a full and fond affection. But, in my boyhood I lost her. A few months after her death, I found, by chance, a relation of hers, about my own age, in the most wretched state of poverty. He was friendless, houseless, naked, starving—a foot-ball, to be kicked by others in their sport. For my dead mother's sake, I protected the outcast, I snatched him to my bosom, and held firm tight there. I brought him to my father's house, and warmed him. He ate with me at the same board; his raiment was as mine own; I relished no sport, no pastime, which he did not share. I shared every thing with him—ay, even my heart. Even *him* I loved, thinking that I caught flittings of my mother's nature, and of her likeness, and of her character, in the milky blandness of his smiles; yea, in all he looked, or said, or did."

Stokesbury went on to describe, as others, even including himself, have described it, the double treachery of which Connor Kennedy had been guilty. We condense; but for the purpose of fully displaying his character, we must venture, even at the risk of being accused of repetition, to give his own expositions of certain points and circumstances.

We take him up, therefore, at his account of his dire quarrel with his father.

"My father snatched a deadly weapon. My cousin's arms were flung around me—'For the love of peace, and for God's love,' he whispered into my ears, while tears streamed down his cheeks—ay, tears ran from his crocodile eyes, as he cajoled me, in my dead mother's voice—and his wet cheek was laid to mine, and its soft chilliness did, indeed, cool my boiling blood. 'For the love of blessed peace, and for God's dear love,' he whispered—'Do not, oh, do not stand up before your father's wrath! I will be your friend with him—the friend that, as you and Heaven know, I ought to be to you on every occasion!' Ay, so he *said*. 'I will appease,' quoth he, 'your father's terrible passion—I will be the peace-maker between ye; I will reconcile the maniac parent with the hasty son. Oh, turn away a moment from his door, and nothing will I leave undone to lead you back to it in peace! My heart's last drop, I will shed, if necessary, to accomplish this! And,' he continued, again appealing to Heaven, 'The Heavens can judge that life itself were but a trifling sacrifice for him who has done everything for me.'

"So—I abode by the counsel of this cousin of mine. Driveller that I was! his influence over me had always been powerful. As I have said, my mother's features, my mother's voice, and my mother's tenderness of nature, seemed to be his; and the slightest word from that mother, during her suffering existence, and delivered in her plaintive accents, used ever to come upon my boyish stubbornness, like gentle, taming music. So, so—my good cousin, led me to the threshold of my father's door; saw me depart from it; and returned into my father's house, shutting its door on himself. Afterwards, we often conferred together in the neighbourhood; for still he kept up a show of endearing affection. His efforts to persuade my father into a forgiving mood, were not, he said, as speedily successful as he had reckoned on, and he therefore advised a temporary absence from my native place, for the purpose of keeping from my father's ears gossipping stories to my prejudice. Again, I complied with his counsel, receiving from his hands liberal means, I know not how acquired, for my journey. Yes; I abandoned not only the paternal roof, but home itself. And I parted in rage against my father, because, as my cousin told me, forsooth, he would not be reconciled to his only son—his only child.

"Whither I went, or who became my associates in my obscure exile it is unnecessary to say. Twelve months elapsed. I heard, by chance, of my father's death, and I hurried home to possess my own inheritance, and to snatch my betrothed bride to my bosom. But

before I had quite reached my journey's end, what were the tidings I learned, think you?"

We again pass over Henry Stokesbury's recapitulation of the acts of treachery with which he and, indeed, the world at large, charged Connor Kennedy.

"I was not formed by nature to bear a wrong tamely;" he continued; "I was not made of the sodden stuff that will yield to trampling, assuming whatever shape the trampler chooses to impress upon it. No! my brain took fire; it burned for vengeance! The law, as they call it, could, or would, yield me none; not even technical redress. The parchments, which had ratified the robbery of my birthright were, of course, duly signed, and sealed, and delivered, as the phrase goes: ay, and properly witnessed, and carefully registered.—And, my Mary, she was in the villain's arms!"

George Blundell started up, sympathyzing deeply with the now fearful energy of the strange Man.

"Yes, yes! I see you can understand me. As you feel now for the irretrievable loss of your Annie, so felt I then for that of my Mary. Yes! a craven, with liquid ice circulating through his heart, might have whined, and wept, and told his story to the dull ears of the law, or of the world, craving a little pity of the listeners: he might have experienced, in return, the cold supercilious-ness bestowed by all upon the wretch and the outcast. But that I did not stoop to:—that I did not attempt to do. This I *did*. I went to my father's house, to my own house, I should say; I burst in my own doors;—I stood upon mine own hearth; and I confronted the reptile, who had mined his way thither. Oh! by the eternal Heavens! it was a sight worth the seeing! That detected knave quailing before me! But not long did I allow him to quail. I struck him to my foot!—I trod upon his carcass!—and I left him, as I thought, a venomous thing, with the life crushed out of him!

"Even in this he deceived me; ay, once again the cousin cozened me. He recovered his vile breath;—he lived on his vile life. Yea, he has lived it on, to play with you the same game that he has so adroitly practised upon me.

"I was seized on the spot, while he yet enacted the part of the dead knave at my feet. I was dragged to a dungeon. I was put to the bar of justice;—no, not to the bar of justice; for justice would never have stood up for the despoiler, and wreaked her vengeance on the outraged. No! but I was placed at that bar where wily villany is legalized in set terms. I cared little for my fate. I had been made a deperate man. My hopes of earthly

happiness, my means of earthly subsistence, every thing, had been torn from me; and at that bar there was but one chance I wished for. I longed, Oh! how I longed, to see my gentle cousin come forward to give his testimony against me! Nay, I slept not, night after night, before my trial, for pondering over and arranging the exposure which I would make of this monster before the world's face! but on this occasion, he acted towards me as he did towards yourself, the other day, before the magistrates. With his own lips he spoke indeed, no word against me; from me he kept quite aloof. But his measures for the destruction of us both were, nevertheless, well taken, and well timed.—I have more to say to you on this subject.

"But, to continue my own frightful story. I cared not how they judged me. I hired no lawyer, no advocate. I attempted no defence of any kind. I was condemned. I was pronounced a criminal, for having entered my own rightful dwelling, and for having punished under its roof the villain who had despoiled me of it, and, with it, my affianced wife! I was condemned—I was sentenced. Ay, by Heaven's light, I was banished from my native country; lopped off, as a canker that infected it! As a felon, they forced me from its shores:—ay, as a *branded* felon! Do ye hear me, George Stokesbury? As a *branded* felon, I say. Look! look! let your own eyes bear witness to the truth of my assertion! look at it well. The mark of infamy! Look at it boy: burned into your father's flesh! look! look!"

Flakes of foam were on his lips; his eyes rolled; and his voice changed to a scream, as he bared his right arm, and exhibited to the almost equally agitated George, the escutcheon of his degradation.

There was a long pause, during which Harry Stokesbury walked impetuously about the room. At length he stopped; and, of a sudden, his passion seemed to have flown. He came close to George Blundell; he peered under the young man's darkened brow, and said,—

"You will remember that I have exposed this arm to you, for I shall challenge your recollection of the fact. Let me also tell you, that when the red-hot villain iron hissed into my blood, communicating its hellish ardour to my whole vital current, I felt,—I *felt*,—that, although not present, it was Connor Kennedy's own hand which ruthlessly stamped on my body the ineffaceable record of a living, walking disgrace!—You attend?"

"No word that you have said is lost upon me," answered George Blundell, with smothered passion.

They were again silent. Stokesbury resumed, coolly:

"You have heard my story. Now, from my twenty years' experience of Connor Kennedy, I have been able to trace all his slimy wiles against yourself. Apply a scale to your wrongs and to mine own; do they not tally? And are you, therefore, surprised that it should have been in my power to render you such a service.

"No," replied George. "And you *can* explain to me the motives for Mr. Kennedy's whole course of conduct towards me?"

"Listen, and decide if I cannot. As I go on, observe, I charge you again, how close a parallel runs between his treatment of you, at present, and his treatment of me, long ago.

"Annie Kennedy was bequeathed, by a dying father, to the care of her infamous betrayer. The will which gave Connor Kennedy this right over her, also endowed Annie with a large fortune. She grew up a lovely girl. From the first bloom of her young charms, her practised guardian coveted her person; her wealth he had always thirsted after. So, he sought to writhe himself into her favour; and his drivelling vanity, misinterpreting the commonplace attentions she bestowed upon him, in gratitude for his care of her childhood, had nearly persuaded him of success, until his eyes were opened by the artless girl's admission of a preference for yourself. Then he endeavoured to wean her from you. But your Annie was faithful to you, George. By Heaven! I can pity you the loss of that sweet girl's affection."

"I ask not your pity, Sir; pity, even from you, I spurn. 'Twould be but a poor satisfaction for all I have endured. Go on, I pray you."

His tempter, with a sneer of triumph, continued:

"When Connor Kennedy found that she loved you, dearly and unalterably, amongst other things, for the good character you bore,—then began his plottings against you. Your stolen visits to me he soon discovered. From my retired mode of life, and my necessarily equivocal position and habits,—for I desired not to be recognised as the felon Harry Stokesbury,—idle rumour had circulated many things to my prejudice. Kennedy also became aware of this fact, and turned it to his own account. By his secret agents, he added to the disreputable insinuations against me, and, by degrees, involved your name with mine, in the odium attendant on such lying stories. More. He actually caused outrages to be committed, and then had them charged on us both. Through the agency of a menial, a vile character whom he loads with bribes to ensure his services, he hired bravos, and, by their hands, and mark

you, while they personated you and me, the daughter of the old man by the river-side, was forced off.

"When you were charged as my accomplice in this act, I could not stand forward as your vindicator, because that must have led to my identification as Harry Stokesbury: but I silenced the silly proceeding in the manner I have already stated to you. Do you begin to comprehend the occurrences of the last few weeks?"

"I attend to every thing you say."

"Well, having failed on this occasion, a deeper plot was laid against your only earthly hopes of happiness; indeed, against your life.

"In the dead of night, Annie Kennedy herself was torn from her home. Tell me, how was entrance gained into Kennedy's house? how could it have been, but by his connivance? Observe, again. For four hours after her abduction, no notice was taken of the fact by him or by his household,—for four long hours. At the end of that lapse of time, Connor Kennedy's own faithful servant was discovered, forsooth, tied to his bed-post, gagged, and so forth. When they made him free to use his tongue again, this fellow it was who accused you of having been a party in the outrage committed on Annie Kennedy. Nay, further, he swore before the sage magistrates, that you had assisted to tie him up and gag him, and otherwise maltreat him."

"I remember."

"Upon that ruffian's testimony, you were sent to prison: upon that ruffian's testimony, you were to be tried and convicted, as a felon; and, had not I interfered to protect you, sent, as I had been, from your native country, disgraced and—branded!"

"How did the hired abductors of Annie Kennedy dispose of her?"

"They took her to a remote place, provided for the occasion, by her guardian;—guardian, forsooth! Ha! ha! There she was informed, and she believed the information, that you were the perpetrator of the violence committed upon her. Ay, and there, by more atrocious measures than even these, your poor Annie, was compelled to become the wife of Connor Kennedy."

"Hell and Heaven! how compelled? What other and more atrocious measures do you speak of?"

"I will answer you in due course. Now for a proof I have promised you of the truth of some of my statements."

Stokesbury struck his heel violently twice or thrice against the floor. A deliberate tread was heard coming up stairs, and Donnelly, Connor Kennedy's servant, entered the room.

"You know this man, George?"

"I do; he is the same you have just spoken of;—the same who swore falsely against me."

"Yes; he is that man. It was easy for me to surmise, knowing that he had been guilty of perjury, who had set him on to destroy you. I sought him out, therefore, and found him as willing to betray his employer for a bribe, as he had been to take one from him."

This was said in a low tone to George; Henry Stokesbury went on aloud. "Sirrah! relate to this young gentleman, as you have already related to me, the plots in which you have been engaged against him."

In a cold and unimpassioned tone and manner, Donnelly complied, verifying Stokesbury's previous accounts to George Blundell, of the wiles, the treachery, and the baseness of Connor Kennedy. To every question proposed by the young man, the scoundrel answered quietly, and to the purpose.

"From what motive did you engage in these matters with Mr. Kennedy?" demanded George Blundell.

"Why, then, 'pon my nate conscience, for what people calls a long purse o' money."

"And you have since divulged Mr. Kennedy's secrets?" continued George.

"Yes, faith, an' so I have; an' does your honour want to know the motive, as you call it, over again? Ha! ha!"

"Yes, declare it."

"Glory to my sowl, then, bud it was for the motive of a longer purse of money than the one that went before it."

"You are satisfied, George?" demanded Stokesbury.

"Yes, yes, I am;" muttered the youth.

"Go down stairs, Donnelly, and await me elsewhere," continued the strange Man of the Inch. Donnelly went away, as unconcerned as if he had but performed some every day business.

George Blundell's feelings were too intense to allow of much exterior exhibition of them. He continued silent. Stokesbury observed him keenly, giving him leisure to cogitate as well as he could, for a necessary period of time, upon all that had been forced on his mind. At length, he suddenly came close to him, and renewed his former question.

"You say you are satisfied?"

George started from his gloomy reverie, and looked into the eyes of his interrogator.

"You spoke to me, sir?"

"*Are* you satisfied?" again asked Stokesbury.

"Satisfied? I do not quite understand the drift of your question."

"I have told you before, George, that I returned to this native land of mine, which, in my boyish days, cast me from its bosom, as it might have cast one of its weeds upon the waters, only for the purpose of promoting and assuring your happiness. I have told you, and you know I can prove it, that, through me, great riches awaited you, strewn like flowers along your path of life. Had your Annie but been left to you, boy, all my hopes, and, perhaps, more than all my hopes, in your regard, might have been realized."

The lad groaned. Suddenly he said:—

"You told me a while ago that you would inform me by what means—you called them atrocious—Annie," his voice shook, "has been compelled to become that man's wife?"

"Ay, so I did; and that is rather an important point. Listen then."

He put his lips to George's ear, and slowly hissed into it a few words.

The youth started up like a wild beast wounded and at bay.

"Beware, sir! Father, though you say you are to me, beware how you say *that!* You know not to what you drive me!"

"I state but the fact, boy. In that lonely and savage place, she could feel no hope of escape, and of re-establishment in the world, after his measures towards her, but by consenting to become his wife. But how do you think he made this really appear to the eyes of uninterested persons? Are you listening to me?"

"I am. Go on!"

"Why, Mr. Connor Kennedy has done no more, nor less, than impress upon the minds of the good Christians of his and our neighbourhood, that you you, yourself, have been the blighter of Annie's character. And that he, through pure Christian charity, has, by becoming her husband, sacrificed himself to bind up in a kind of legal, technical way, her tarnished reputation. And now, let me ask you, do these little facts help still further to explain Annie Kennedy's letter to you in your dungeon?"

"All is explained," answered George, in a deep, shivering, agonized voice; "Yes—the explanation is full. And, oh! it has changed my blood into hot venom, my heart into the hardest stone! Merciless—merciless, it has made me!—The wrongs against my Father and against myself were, to be sure, sufficient to inspire me with a deadly purpose. Yet I tried to push the thought from me,

while it prompted merely an act of vengeance. But now do I cease to be an avenger!"—he screamed out, starting up—"now am I called upon, as if by the voice of Heaven itself, to become the minister of justice!"

"Before this moment," continued Stokesbury, feigning not to have heard the last words, "I kept from you all avowal of a determination to which I had come, even before we had begun to speak.—Now, however, I deliberately ask you—does not the double traitor,—the treble, the ten-fold traitor, and villain—deserve, at my hands, what earthly law refuses to mete out to him—namely, punishment?"

"Why ask me such useless questions?—Had you but listened, I have already answered you."

"Perhaps I might have returned to the better-loved land of my adoption, without deciding upon such a blow, had not the wrongs committed upon my son, roused up, and added new rancour to those perpetrated upon myself.—Had not I found that the villain who poisoned the source of my life's stream—not contented with that,—had flung new infection into its current!—Shall he a second time escape me?—I ask you again, does not Connor Kennedy merit punishment?"

"Have some compassion on me! Do not lacerate me so! Connor Kennedy *shall* be punished."

"He shall, by Heaven!—this very night, boy! Within this very hour, perhaps, I will avenge you! you and myself,—upon the closely-coiled, the fully-gorged, the self-secure reptile! Await me here—all my measures are arranged. You are already an object of the persecution of their laws:—in a very short time so shall I be also. When I return, be prepared to accompany me towards a remote and safe place of refuge."

"Father! Do not touch those pistols on the table!"

"And why not?—They are my doomed instruments of——punishment on Connor Kennedy."

"No—no! For that purpose—that holy purpose, they are mine!—No other living creature has a right to them! Let *me* have the weapons!"

The strange man's eyes dilated and flashed, his whole face was ablaze with triumph. But the maddened boy saw or heeded it not.

"Well; well! I certainly had no intention to depute my office: if I do, there must be no half-measures, remember. As I had sworn to act, you—my self-elected agent—and my son—must act."

"Have no doubt, no fear of me!"

"Nay—I will not relinquish my sacred right, unless you swear—that he dies!—Aye—and unless you swear it upon this blessed book, in which we all believe." His face still alight with a devilish glow, he took from his bosom the volume of which he spoke, and handed it, impressively, to George.

"I swear!"—responded the wretched lad, hastily catching it up, and pressing it to his fevered lips.

"Attend to me for a moment, then. With the ruffian whom you have just seen here, I had arranged my manner of admission into Connor Kennedy's house: since you are to represent me, I must explain it to you. The fellow knows not, indeed, my intention—in visiting his master's premises; but no matter about that. Listen to me, I say, and note me well—Three knocks at the hall-door; thus—thus—and thus—" The speaker, with the back of his clenched hand, accompanied each "thus," with a stroke upon the hollow wainscoting of the room, which produced a sound that curled, while it still maddened, the young man's blood.

"Yes! yes! Now the pistols—give me both."

"One will be sufficient! I have prepared them with my own hands, and can assure you, therefore, that either one or the other may be depended upon."

"I require both, I say!—Ay—now I am properly armed. Fare you well. You are the father of a wretched, wretched son—the blighted stem of a blighted scion! Yet let me take your hand—Fare you well—you shall be revenged—Yes!—along with *her*, and with me, you shall be revenged!"

The boy convulsively grasped the hand extended to him;—his hot red eye shed no tear over the separation which he doomed should be final. Then, hiding the pistols in a hurried manner, he rushed bare-headed and panting, into the street.

Harry Stokesbury, while returning his parting salutation, as he looked intently and studiously into the expression of that eye, became satisfied that he had wrought upon the lad sufficiently to ensure the dreadful consummation after which he had long thirsted.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE same evening, the Mayor of Wind-gap, with Shawn Leeach and Gregory Roche, were seated together in confidential council.

His Worship sat in the middle of his usual council-hall—namely, the earthen-floored, but tidily arranged kitchen of his thatched house, and he was seated in his municipal wicker chair. The three had for some time been very serious, and still were so; exhibiting, in fact, the faces of gravity, and the decorous manners particularly characteristic of them, when engaged upon matters of great public importance.

Their conversation is taken up, at the moment most convenient for our purpose, and for the reader's leisure.

"You're very ould, Shawn Leeach; the winther's snow is heavy on your head; and yet your head is fast on your neck for all that, Shawn. Don't I spake a truth?" demanded the Mayor, "very wisely."

"Mayor of Wind-gap, you do. Five-score-and-five-years, I have been on this earth—and that is a long age, praise to my Maker. And ould age brings the snowy head—spring comes to the fields, and to the threes, and the flowers of the fields, afther the winther passes; but there's no spring for the ould man; none in this world at laste; if he hopes for the spring time, his hope must be fixed on heaven. Yes—Mayor of Wind-gap, I am very ould, as you say, but my snow-white head is still on my shouldhers."

"Well, Shawn; as thrue as *that* is thrue, and I repeat it over again to ye both—Harry Stokesbury that was, and the sthrange Man now living at the Inch-house, makes only one man between them."

"The death of a happy Christhian be my lot, Mayor of Wind-gap, but that is news to make people wondher," observed Shawn Leeach.

"Well did I know him, when he was in his youth," remarked Gregory Roche. "But though my eyes—I give glory for the same—are as good to see with, now, as the day I got them, never would they find out the ruddy-cheeked and the handsome Harry Stokesbury, in that dark, wicked-looking man, that stood in the light of the bonfire last St. John's-eve."

"For all that, Gregory," resumed Maurteen Maher, "and you may take my word for it, I say to you over again—the man that you saw standin' in the light of the fire, that night, was the same Harry Stokesbury you knew in his young days."

"It is seldom I found you to be far asthray, Mayor of Wind-gap, an' so it's asy for me to give you my b'lief in what you say at present. It was not for having a stupid head the neighbours made you Mayor over them. Only, I'm thinkin', you had some help, be-

sides your own eyes in making out a likeness between Harry Stokesbury, and the sthrange Man of the Inch."

"You yourself spakes now like a man that had his wits to the good, Gregory Roche," replied the Mayor. "Yes! by my own honest thruth, it would be a keen eye would know the young sapling of former days, out of the present ould oak of the Inch. And so I *had* help, along with my own eyes, Gregory: I am goin' to tell you all about it—you and Shawn Leeach together. And mind ye, both, now ye are sittin' here, at the one side and the other o' me, that we may hold a thrue council; and ye may know all that I know; and that I may have your advice on the head of the whole of it. Because we'll have to take on to the business, in regular coorse."

"We'll each do our endeavour, plaze the Lord!" said Shawn Leeach, solemnly,

"And ye know, moreover, that 'tis our ould way that what we spake to each other, when we sit in council, must not go from mouth to ear. For if t'was a thing that we shared our knowledge among all the world, mostha! there wouldn't be half money's worth in it. When apples are bending the boughs in every orchard, sure they are not bought up as greedy as when there is only two for a half-penny. More be token, I wouldn't talk to men, wid an ould woman's gaddin' tongue: ould women, we all know, must get nothing at all to tell, if you'd have the hearth swept."

"What you're sayin' shews the sense God gave you," flattered Shawn Leeach.

"Mayor of Wind-gap," quoth Gregory Roche, more pithily, "a silent tongue doesn't shame the owner. Sure, if every one was as wise as ourselves, there would be a mayor in every house on Wind-gap-hill; and then we might go wid our judgments out o' the place; and lave nothin' behind us but constructions, and law,—instead of bein' good neighbours to each other, undher God—and us."

"'Tis plain," resumed Maurteen, "that ye are both the sort I took you for, when I made ye my council. And so, I'll be open-hearted wid ye. Ye want to learn how I found out that the sthrange Man of the Inch was Harry Stokesbury. Well. Have ye the memory of a poor *colleen*, a sisther o' mine, that lived among us, and was merry among us, twenty years ago?"

"It's right well I bring her to my mind—poor Kate Maher!" answered Shawn Leeach.

"And 'tis, have *I* the memory of her, you want to know, Mayor of Wind-gap?" asked Gregory Roche; "achone! and it's sure that

I have. Kate Maher was worthy for a prince to look upon: tall an' comely she was, in her shape; an' her cheek plump, an' smooth, and red, like the bloom on the apple; an' her eyes was the blue sky of a May mornin'; and her hair was the shinin' goold. *Arrah*, yes; there wasn't your fellow, Kate Maher, on the hill o' Wind-gap."

"It's often, before now, her own ears heard your flatthering speeches of her, Gregory Roche. Well would it have been for her, twenty years ago, if she gave heed to them, only half as often as she heard them. Well. The neighbours never knew what happened to Kate Maher, or why she went away from us. Ye are both going to hear her story, for the first time that it ever came from my lips.

"Young Harry Stokesbury took our poor Kate's heart; and, to my sore sorrow, she wasn't honester for knowin' him. And when he was sent across the says, she went into the same ship with Harry Stokesbury, in a sailor-boy's dhress, all for the love of him. Yes, Mayor's council; she left kith and kin, hearth-stone and home and counthry, for his sinful sake.

"Well, neighbours, the ship was smashed into little bits—just as a body would break a nut-shell—upon the rocky shores of a sthrange country, a great way off from Wind-gap. Harry Stokesbury was the only mankind that lived out of the wrack; all the rest of the men that were in the ship—and a fine, great, big ship it was—sank to the bottom o' the say, and its wathers roared over them. And my poor Kate was the only woman-kind saved at the same time; and it was Harry Stokesbury that saved her. Many others, may be, man and woman, he might have thried to save—for, as ye all know, he was the best swimmer we ever seen, on breast or back, in the river that runs undher our feet: stay out in it, he used to do, like one of its own fishes—only that he just kept his chin above the wather—for hours together, and then dart back to the bank where he left his clothes, and jump up on it, as if he had been only takin' a walk in my little garden, where I keep the osiers growing, for my basket thrade, and sometimes for my chair thrade.

"Howsomever, he only saved but the one. And that one was the poor creature that left her counthry for him; my poor misfortunate, and only sisther, Kate Maher. Long did he fight wid the terrible waves o' the angry say, but he would not go from death, without her. Until at last his feet touched the shores o' the sthrange counthry, and she, senseless, in his arums.

"From that time to the present time, the most befitting thing

for me to say is that poor Kate Maher never left the man that wouldn't care about his own life, until he had saved hers. Though it grieves me sore to tell ye that many, and many a time, since that day, she got good cause to quit him.

"Avoch, neighbours! Ye have heard everybody talkin' of an unfortunate ould woman, that keeps house for him at the Inch. Sore it goes against my heart to say that that woman—withered before her time--though, as ye both know, not yet as ould as the people call her—is my poor sisther. Now ye can give a guess how I got my knowledge of who the sthrange Man is, and, more be token, of some of his doin's since he came to live near us, for the second time in his life."

"'Tis mighty wondherful to harken to the words o' your mouth; mighty wondherful, in good thruth, Maurteen Maher," said old Shawn Leeach, sitting more upright, and looking more vivacious, than for many years had been his expression. Tears were in his eyes, too.

"Achone! it's often I sarched out tidin's o' my poor Kate, afore this blessed hour," groaned Gregory Roche;—bud you held the silent tongue, Mayor o' Wind-gap. It's heart-sorry for her I am this day. Och!—if she had only lived among us 'till the presant time, in the wholesome air that comes up here from the river, she would have no wrinkle in her face—for my poor Kate Maher is not yet an ould woman."

"No, Gregory, as I tould you afore. But a sthrange coorse of life, and a life of sin and hardship, and the airly thoughts of her youth—for she was bred up to love and sarve God—stalin' like the blight of the unwholesome wind upon her—Made Kate Maher what she is, before her time.—Yes;—made her comb a grey head, afore another girl of her years would have a white hair in it, to tell of the comin' winther. So that her cheek was shrivelled up by the woe of her sperit.—Och! neighbours, neighbours, she has tould me herself not to wondher at the wrinkles of her face; for that the constant cryin' from her eyes would wear channels into the hardest marble." The voice of the stoical Mayor of Wind-gap trembled; nor were his council uninfected by his feelings.

"The Lord forgive her, and bring her to a thrue sinse of her sins," said old Shawn Leeach.

"The Lord pity her, and be her comfort," ejaculated the more sympathizing Gregory Roche.

"Neighbours, I am after telling ye what I would not tell, and what I never will tell to another livin' crathure. Our poor Kate

must now go to her grave without the world's knowledge that she is alive here among us. All I can now thry to do for my sisther, is to take her quietly away from the man that has made her what she is;—that's one o' the things I want your help in. And so listen—We must do our endayvours to get her free with Harry Stokesbury's own good will. If he had a notion that she tould the secrets of her life, her death-doom was given. I intend, neighbours, to get something for her to live on, while she is on this earth, repenting of her sins, and prayin' for mercy. And I have the plan in my mind how to do this.—Ay and another thing at the same time, if the Lord gives us his help."

"It will be a work of charity, and He will assist us," said Shawn Leeach.

"In Him we put our thrust.—Well, neighbours, I have more to tell ye.

"The name of the counthry isn't in my mind where Harry Stokesbury brought Kate Maher out of the say.—But there is people far away from us that never earn an honest mouthful of food, from the beginning of the year to the year's ending.—And they have ships;—and they sail out in them upon the say;—and they meet other ships full of marchandizes of all sorts and loaded with chests of money;—and they fight with those ships;—and they conquer them;—and they shed the blood of the Christians they find in them;—and they make their own of all the riches;—and there is nothing terrible that these robbers of the say don't do. Now, mind me well. It was among these wicked people that Harry Stokesbury landed out of the wrack with Kate Maher.—And Harry soon began to love and like their ways;—he was a bould and a brave man, and he soon made himself Captain of a robbin' ship. Then poor Kate was soon overlooked by him;—he took up with fine ladies;—and she was only his sarvant. But still she worked with a good heart for the man she loved dearly, and that saved her at the risk of his own life, from a winding sheet o' the salt say-wather—Neighbours, she did."

"The Lord look down upon us, and purtect us!" prayed Gregory Roche in consternation.

"Ye have the knowledge, Mayor's council, of what Harry Stokesbury did, that brought banishment upon him. But there is more to be said on that score;—and only three people in the world can tell ye what the more is. And I am one of the three.

"A little while before Connor Kennedy lost his wife, she brought a male-child into the world. She was not well of her lying-in,

when her husband was half-killed at her bed-side—and 'twas that sent herself to her arly grave—Connor Kennedy and she did not wish that any one should be the wiser of her marriage;—they were afraid of Harry Stokesbury;—and they thought to hide it, in hopes of getting his good will, before any one could tell him of it. For that rason they sent away the child as soon as it saw the light. That child was forced off from its nurse, and no one can tell the fate of the crature, to this day barrin' the three people I spoke to ye of before. But, neighbours, the child was sazed on by Harry Stokesbury;—and it is a man at the present time, alive; and more betoken, a comely gorsoon to look upon. An' the two o' ye that I'm talkin' to have often seen him, face to face, an' are mightily plazed with his looks.—More than once, I heard Greogory Roche say,"—Here Gregory started, and looked confounded—"that he was as brave a boy as ever he liked to see, comin' up from the town below, to Wind-gap-hill. Gregory Roche, don't I spake the thruth to you?—Answer me like a Christhin."

"The Heavens be my bed," answered Gregory Roche, making the sign of the Cross on his forehead—"if I can call to mind who or what you mane at all, Mayor of Wind-gap."

"I am five-score years, and some more years on the back of them, living on Wind-gap-hill, where sthrange people goes to and fro, and sthrange things are hard of. But the likes o' this never came across me before," said Shawn Leeach.

"You might thravel a long summer's day, Shawn, and you would not find one to know what the Mayor knows," adulated Gregory Roche.

"I know more, neighbours. I know Connor Kennedy's boy—ay—I know him, to spake to him;—and I know where he is while we are discoursin about him."—The Mayor paused, waiting, perhaps, for a new flattering comment. But his two old counsellors were too intent with their ears to use their tongues;—he was, therefore, obliged to go on.

"Shawn Leeach, and Gregory Roche—as sure as ye are both sittin' here, this is the thruth.—Connor Kennedy's son goes by the name of George Blundell.

"Why, the Lord be good to us!—Isn't id thrue, at the same time, then, that the Father has the Son in gaol, and that he'll hang him on the gallows-hill, over there?" And Gregory pointed to a sudden conical elevation of ground on the opposite side of the river, then the honoured place of execution.—"An' if Connor Kennedy is that boy's Father, didn't the Son break into the Father's house,

and take away his own Sisther!—For you know, Mayor of Wind-gap, the people say that the young girl livin' with Connor Kennedy is his daughter. And then, won't the Brother have to answer for the Sisther's shame?—And won't the Father have to answer for the death o' the Son?"

"I tould ye, Mayor's council, that the first thing you'r to give your advice in, is the freein' of unfortunate Kate Maher from Harry Stokesbury, with his own free will. Now I tell ye, that the other thing ye have to do is to give your counsel how we are to keep the Father from the hangin' of his own Son."

"Mayor of Wind-gap," said Shawn Leeach, impressively, "won't you go to Connor Kennedy and tell him his Son is livin'; and that the boy in the gaol is that son?—Wont you, this moment?"

"If I did, Shawn, Connor Kennedy would have only my word for the thruth o' the sayin': and, on account of all we have to do, that would never be enough. There is only the one man on the face o' the arth can prove—prove it, I mane, beyond all doubt—that George Blundell is Connor Kennedy's son—and that man is Harry Stokesbury."

"Mayor o' Wind-gap," demanded Gregory Roche, imploringly—"Has the Brother to stand before the judgment-sate, to give an account o' the poor young Sisther?"

"Gregory Roche, I am goin' to make answer to you, in a way that will put the wondher on you more than any word ye have yet hard me spake. The Brother had nothing to do with taking away the Sisther. But the Father had all to do with takingaway the Daughter."

"Ulla-loo!" ejaculated Gregory, "one sayin' o' your's bates the other, out-an-out. Will you make known to me this, then?—Didn't Connor Kennedy put the boy in gaol for doin' what he never done, but what the wicked Father o' the young *colleen* made come to pass with his own hands."

"Mind me, again, Gregory. The wicked father o' the young *colleen* took her away, of a sartainty; but not Connor Kennedy. *He* had no more to do with it than poor young George Blundell had."

And interrupting his council in expressions of a climax of their astonishment, Maurteen Maher added—"It was Harry Stokesbury forced her away. And as sure as George Blundell is Connor Kennedy's son, Annie Kennedy is Harry Stokesbury's daughter!"

Here the feelings of the listeners became too deep for any thing but vague mutterings; till at length Shawn Leeach asked—"*Chrossa-Christha* about us!—And did the wicked villain o' the arth know

who was in his hands, the night he took Annie Kennedy from her home?"

"No, Shawn; no more than Gregory Roche knew it; and I b'lieve Gregory won't purtend to much knowledge on the matther. But, listen to me, still, neighbours, and thry if I can't give ye some insight.

"From the day and hour that Harry Stokesbury was banished from his counthry, up to this blessed moment, he never forgave Connor Kennedy. 'Tis my thought of him, that he'd turn the world inside out—ay, sell himself, sowl and body to some one we won't make mention of—to do this cousin an evil. And so thinkin', like yourself and the rest o' the people, Gregory, that Annie Kennedy was his Daughter, wicked Harry ran off with her, to spite the man he thought was her Father."

"Oh, *veeha vaugha*,* Mayor of Wind-gap!" cried Shawn Leeach, his snowy head shaking to extremity—"and did the misfortunate man bring the disgrace on his own child? Achone! did that come to pass so near the Wind-gap-hill?"

"No, Shawn Leeach; he learned who she was in time," answered the Mayor consequentially, and to a nice observer, egotistically.

"Then, may the Heavens be blest, this night! For if such a thing had happened, wouldn't it be enough to bring down upon the earth the angry fire from Heaven, and to make the innocent suffer with the guilty?"

"Who was the blessed Christian that stretched out his hand, in time?" demanded Gregory Roche, see-sawing his body in deep sympathy.

"It was myself that was able, undher the Lord's mercy, to do the good deed, Gregory."

"Och! the blessin's light upon you! an' I wouldn't doubt you, Mayor o' Wind-gap."

"Well, neighbours. But there is one thing that I am asthray upon. By help o' the poor Kate Maher, I was able to dive to the bottom of a great many of Harry Stokesbury's doin's; but it is beyand her knowing, and, by coorse, beyand my knowing, what he has in his head, by conthrivin' to make the father, Connor Kennedy, put the son, George Blundell, in gaol. For, ye must know, it was Harry Stokesbury that got Donnelly to swear against the poor young boy. Donnelly—the greatest rapparee unhanged this night. He'd rob the althar for money; and it was for threachery that he was put into Connor Kennedy's house."

"And so, Maurteen Maher, we are to give you our counsel upon the point, why the wicked Man o' the Inch has got Connor Kennedy to let George Blundell be sent to the common gaol?"

"Yes; but first, here is my own notion about it. As I tould ye afore, Stokesbury 'ud go to the thrashold o' the bottomless pit, if not farther, to have one good, heavy blow at Connor Kennedy. And I was thinkin' in my own mind, that to make his cousin's ould age come on before its time, and to send him despairing to the grave, he wants—since he has found out that Annie Kennedy is not Connor's child, and that he cannot for the same rason, wrake his hatred upon her—he wants, I say, to make the Father an instrument in takin' away the son's life. Then he'll come to Kennedy, and say to him—'Look, now, at that sthrangled corpse—and look at it well—for 'tis the corpse o' your own boy! In this manner, cousin Kennedy, I have a little revenge on you; in this manner I pay you part of what I have owed you these twenty long years, for robbing me of my fortune, of my father's love, and of my bethrothed wife!'"

The Mayor's council shuddered, and prayed that all good Christians might be kept out of the power of a man capable of such unimaginable villany.

"Shawn Leeach and Gregory Roche, this work of darkness we must gainsay, if Heaven vouchsafes to give us the wisdom, and the patience, and the manes to do it."

Solemnly, and with zealous protestations, his Worship's compeers expressed their anxiety to aid and abet him to the utmost of their ability. "And," added Shawn Leeach, "our humble prayers will help you too, morning and evening, Maurteen Maher."

"And I will go on my knees, and pray, too," continued the Mayor. "But," and his manner became impressive and alarming—"still I have a fear that we must fail in our endeavours. First, the fear came from my being in the dark, as to Stokesbury's raal intentions in regard o' the young George: and now I have the fear that we are to fail, by rason o' the doom that is on the poor boy. A thought comes heavy and black into my mind, that death is afore him, and that he must face it. Shawn Leeach, give me the words of your age, upon what I will ask you. When the first son of a marriage comes into the world on a Whit-Sunday mornin', afore the day dawns in the sky—isn't there a doom upon that son?"

Daddy Leeach answered, in all the slow sententiousness of oracular exposition, his eyes solemnly fixed on the ground:

"Mayor of Wind-gap, there is a doom, a woful doom upon the

first son of a marriage that is born of a Whit-Sunday mornin' afore the day breaks, to give him a welcome. During my stay in this wicked world, the doom came to pass three times, to my own certain knowledge."

"And oh! Lord, be good to us! what is the doom, Shawn Leeach?" asked Gregory Roche.

"This is the doom, Gregory. When that son comes to his twenty-first year, he will kill a fellow-creature, or some fellow-creature's hand will kill him. Ay, surely, surely! Blood he is to shed, or else his own must be shed."

"Then, Shawn Leeach, I tell you that Gerald Kennedy, for that is the name he got at his christhenin', the first son, after his parents' marriage, was born into the world of a Whit-Sunday morning, afore the dawn broke up the clouds o' the night. And, moreover, that his twenty-first year is on his young head."

"The Lord have a care of him, since such is his case!" prayed Daddy Leeach.

"Oh! Amen," cried Gregory. "And, Mayor o' Wind-gap, won't it, oh, won't it be a frightful thing if his own Father's hand is to bring down the doom on young George Blundell? Is'nt it in your power to save him? Or in the power of us all, or of any one?"

"Gregory Roche, I have the dhread that 'tis out of our power to save him. We want to go to work in a very conthrary business, and, as yet, we do not see a stim of our way afore us. I tould ye, a while ago, that t'would be of no use for me to go to Connor Kennedy, and tell who George Blundell is: without proofs, and good ones, too, he would laugh at ould Maurteen Maher, and no blame to him. I said to ye, at the same time, that Harry Stokesbury is the only livin' man who can give us the kind of proof we want: how we are to make him give that, is the question. And yet, along with getting poor Kate Maher out of his Divil's clutches, of his own free will, with freedom for her to end her days in her own counthry, repenting of her sins—we must conthrive to make him do it, neighbours. If we don't, no other three heads on Wind-gap-hill—not to talk o' the town below—will carry the point. But, now, Mayor's council, let us each go to bed, and sleep on it. To-morrow may bring us wisdom."

CHAPTER XIX.

It is not, we hope, forgotten, that the council held by the wise men of Wind-gap took place on the evening when George Blundell, or, more properly, Gerald Kennedy, escaped from prison, and conferred with Harry Stokesbury. It now further appears that Maurteen Maher's sagacity was at fault, as to Stokesbury's designs upon the youth. That, in fact, his little birdeen, in other words, his sister, had failed to fathom the desperate man's present purpose. Nay, it is also apparent that, about the time when the three sages, puzzled by the business in hand, agreed to "sleep on it," in the hope of getting up more enlightened the next morning, Gerald Kennedy had already set out on his road to the destruction from which they were anxious to save him. To the accomplishment of that doom, indeed, predicted by Daddy Leeach for a man in his twenty-first year, and unfortunately born under the peculiar circumstances which attended Gerald's birth.

Stokesbury, upon the lad's sudden and agitated departure from the house in which they held their last conversation, prepared to follow him, to dog his steps, and keep an eye upon his motions and actions. But it happened to become most necessary for him to hold in his possession, before he and Gerald should again meet, the proofs of his young victim's parentage. To get at these he was obliged to visit the house at the Inch; and thus some time unavoidably elapsed, ere he could proceed to ascertain the result of his diabolical scheme of vengeance.

At length, he stood at the door of Connor Kennedy's dwelling. He listened. All seemed still and peaceable within.

"Has his heart failed him, and has he not come hither at all? Or has he *done it*, and have they again lodged him in their gaol? Or, has he used the second pistol, and does the roof of this silent house cover two corpses,—one of them his own?" In this manner did Harry Stokesbury commune with himself for a few moments.

Then he gave three low knocks at the door, and again listened. No one replied to his signal. He repeated it. The door still remained closed. Muttering curses against Donnelly for his lack of attention, he knocked louder and more boldly. Suddenly he started, and his figure became rigidly fixed in a position of deep and stern attention. The sharp report of a pistol-shot was heard within, reverberating to a double compass, as it rang through the apartmen tsof the house.

"There! he *has* used *one* of the pistols, at least," pursued the listener.

The door was suddenly pulled open;—old Joseph Fitzgerald was rushing past him into the dark and silent street,

"Stop!" cried Stokesbury, "what is the meaning of that shot in your house?"

"Oh, sir! whoever you are," answered the servant, "for Heaven's sake, give Christian help to secure the man that has murthered my masther in his sleep!"

"Murdered your master! and is the murderer known to you?"

"Yes, yes, sir! a young man that escaped from the common gaol this evening. His name is George Blundell."

"Ay, indeed? Lead the way, then, I will secure him for you."

The white-headed servant preceded his supposed assistant up stairs, and into the drawing-room. A single chamber-light flickered upon the table: Gerald Kennedy was seated close to it, his elbow resting on the table, and his forehead pressing on his hand. There was one pistol lying near the candle, and another in the hand that hung at length by his chair.

"There is the murtherer," said Joseph Fitzgerald. Then, turning his regard on Stokesbury, he started back, when, in his person he recognised the strange Man of the Inch, and was about to retire from the room, muttering inaudibly.

"Stand your ground, man! I require your presence," said Stokesbury, intercepting him, locking the door, and putting the key in his pocket.

The bravo next advanced slowly to Gerald Kennedy, laid his hand on his shoulder, and shook him.

The youth raised his head, and looked into his friend's face.

"Well?" asked Stokesbury.

Gerald Kennedy made no answer.

"That shot?" continued Stokesbury; "the old servant tells me it was you who fired it."

"He tells you the fact," replied Gerald, in a low, hoarse whisper.

"And from this pistol it was discharged?" pursued the strange Man of the Inch, taking up that which lay on the table, near the young man's elbow.

"Yes; from that pistol the shot was discharged."

Stokesbury studiously examined the weapon, with a view to ascertain if it had been recently exploded, and soon seemed satisfied of the fact. Gerald saw him smile.

"You do not want the second?" he asked.

"No. I had, indeed, intended this one in my hand for another purpose. But I change my mind now;—the courageous midnight murderer should abide the consequences of his act." Gerald Kennedy flung far from him the pistol he had hitherto held in his right hand.

Stokesbury re-approached the old servant, and spoke to him in a low tone.

"He was asleep, I think you said, when this young ruffian murdered him?"

"Asleep in his bed," answered Joseph Fitzgerald; "my poor master got no time to pray for mercy on his soul."

"So; so! But are you sure there are no hopes of him? Are you sure he is dead, quite dead?"

"Oh! to my sorrow I am. Dead, dead he is. Aye, and cowld, cowld, by this time."

"Let me see the body."

"I will, sir. But won't you first make sure o' the prisoner for us?"

"Ha, you are right; yes. Before any thing else, I have to bring him to an account."

So saying Harry Stokesbury again came close to Gerald Kennedy.

"Young man," he demanded, "don't you feel quieter now? Quieter, I mean, than when we last spoke together?"

"Tell me what you mean," said Gerald.

"Why, you know you have killed him. Are you not, therefore, satisfied?"

"And are not you, as well as I?"

"Listen to me. I am going to tell you something. If you happen to feel really concerned for the little act you have committed, I can comfort you. It was out of your power to have avoided something of the kind, even if you would have done so. You have but fulfilled a fate assigned to you, at your birth; before it, for aught I know."

Gerald Kennedy sprang up, and gazed steadfastly at his tormentor.

"I do not understand you," he said.

"Why, boy, the case is even thus. While you were but an infant, a small mass of creeping flesh, more helpless and more contemptible than the worm; in fact, when you were but a few days old, I was wisely informed that, because you happened to be whelped upon a particular day, the which day, as it seemeth good to Providence, is to prove a curse to all male brats born within a certain number of

its hours ;—for this reason, I say, I was sagely, credibly told, that you had been doomed, upon attaining your twenty-first year, either to shed blood, or to have your own blood shed. Therefore, my lad, do not blame yourself for what you have done to-night. Blame your stars, rather, which allowed you to be introduced among us, in this world, at a forbidden moment."

"There is something in your mode of speech, and in your accents, and in your look, at present, that chills me," said Gerald Kennedy. It seems as if you would now sneer at me for doing that which you drove me on to do."

"Not at all, not at all ; you mistake. I merely want to reconcile you to yourself. For is it not quite plain to you, that, when the doing of a murder, when the sluicing of human blood, had been assigned to you, by fate, or by whatever else you choose to call your Lord High Admiral aloft, you could not possibly do otherwise than obey orders and work ship ? This being allowed, I now have to demand your thanks for having set you on, as you say. Remember, I had a good look-out for your personal safety, boy, after you should have fulfilled your doom by blowing out the brains of the man we used to call Mr. Connor Kennedy. This very night, in fact, if you and I continue of a mind, I can snatch you, as I before hinted, out of all reach of their bother, on the head of what you have done. Surely you now comprehend why you should thank me, do you not ?"

Gerald replied, impatiently, that he did not, even yet, understand him.

"Look you then ! Had I left you to take your own chance, in working out that terrible doom that was upon you, ten to one, but yours might have been the life lost, instead of another man's ;—ten to one again, but the odds might have been against you in an encounter with a different kind of person. In Mr. Connor Kennedy I took care, however, to provide for you a man whom you could kill, without much danger of being killed by him. Then, as to the time and circumstances of the murder, you are still fortunate. The poor man was asleep ;—his head resting comfortably upon his pillow, when you put one of my little pistols to it. Weak as was the worm, he might have turned upon you, had he been awake, you know. Does all this show no fatherly care of you, boy ?"

"It is popularly credited," said Gerald Kennedy, his eyes fixed upon the sneering, yet triumphant countenance of the speaker, "that your human shape is but an outward semblance, and that a Devil of darkness possesses, animates, and governs it. I am now inclined to adopt that belief. For thus, it is said, does the enemy

of man, with wily wisdom, lead his dupe into crime, and then mock at the wretch for having fallen."

"What! give me hard words, only for my watchfulness over your precious life? Out upon you for an ungrateful boy! Yes, ungrateful you are. And there is but one other sin more heinous than ingratitude: that one is murder! Cool murder, I mean; stealthy, cowardly, midnight murder!"

"Oh! how revolting is all this!" cried the boy, recoiling, but still watching, as one fascinated, the gleaming looks of his tempter.

"The last time you and I laid our heads together, I told you, that when I had left Connor Kennedy trampled down on my own hearth-stone, I thought my full revenge was wreaked upon him, but that he, even in this, deceived me. More, that instead of ensuring my own triumphant vengeance that night, the villain was still able to wreathe his coils closer and closer around me;—was stil able to crush and sting, till he made the remainder of my life but one long writhing fit of shame and degradation. Well, you, good youth, had previously been placed by me, as an infant, where I could find you when I had leisure. Find you, to bring you up for any purpose, which on reflection, should appear best to me! Well, I say, after the sentence which sent me, branded like Cain, into a strange country, I felt, whenever the recollection of your existence occurred to me, that revenge by my own hand upon the author of all my ruin, would not be half enough. That your hand, ay, yours only, must, from that moment, be appointed and directed to right me. And such, at last, turns out to be the case. At last, I *am* righted."

"It was a fell and baleful plan," said Gerald. "Why should I—I, your son, have been selected for effecting it? And how can my hand have avenged you better than your own could have done?"

"My son!—but I will answer you in my own way, and yet quite to your satisfaction, I have no doubt. Hearken to me. I have been, and I am, a bold and a courageous man. With my single arm often have I overpowered heavy odds; but that was in fair fighting. Always excepting my wish to trample, to buffet, ay, to kick to death, the dastard Connor Kennedy, never have I taken a life in cold blood;—never have I thought of so taking one. *My* enemies were met front to front, and battle roared around us; I pushed my full breast against them; we encountered on the compact of the valiant; 'Search for my heart with your sword, if your arm be stronger, or your blow surer, than mine!' No! the poor dog that crouched and crawled for mercy, never could I smite. When his

death was needful, have I left him, left him, mark you, to be dealt upon by meaner hands than mine own! And in proportion to my manly disgust of a mean assassination, are my dislike and contempt of the mean assassin. Ay, the skulking, cowardly, midnight murderer I do detest;—with him I can hold no intercourse; and him I do repudiate. In his base veins there could never have run a drop of the lion's blood that courses through mine!'

"Father, what mean you?"

"Father! Reptile, spawn, poltroon, man-killer! you are, in truth, no son of mine. I lied to the teeth, when I said you were. But I lied boldly, and for my purpose, as I also did on sundry other points, with you. For instance, I told you that Kennedy had plotted against you, and then I lied. I told you that he had suborned Donnelly against you, and then I lied, too. Listen to me with your soul! I told you that he had seduced your Annie from you—that he had injured her, and that, at last, he had married her. Again, and again, and again, and on, on to the end of the chapter, I lied and lied, and lied. Why? ha, ha! why? to madden you into the mood for doing what you have so nobly done! To make sure of your killing Connor Kennedy! To make sure, quite sure, of his death by your hand! By his own son's hand! Ay, at that you will gape at me. But, just as true as that you are no son of mine, it is true that you *are* the son of the man whose blood is upon you! whose grovelling, traitor-blood gave life to your heart, fitly timing its pulses for such an action! For, as I told you before, blood of mine could never have warmed you, or, rather, cooled you down to the perpetration of such a mean atrocity."

"Now, I do not believe you," said Gerald.

"Sirrah! not believe me?"

"No, I do not believe you! I am not Connor Kennedy's son: 'tis a fiendish fiction. 'Tis an impossibility, an utter impossibility."

"And what, particularly, makes you so very incredulous?" sneered Stokesbury.

"Because I feel convinced that you, even you, Devil as you are, never could conceive the thought of setting on the Son to kill the Father. You dare not! Heaven would not suffer you to do so. I say again, I do not believe you. I say again, I am not Connor Kennedy's son."

"You have spoken well, boy, passing well. There is pith in your words; and your view of right and wrong is very correct. Yes, I do myself declare it is a black and ugly deed to murder a father! Yet that deed you have done."

"I have not! *You* live; and you *are* my father. You have brought me up as your offspring; you have given me the title of son, and that title I will uphold, even against yourself, before the world."

"Psha!—I can easily disprove your title."

"I dare you to that disproof!"

"Fool! do you think I cannot make my words good?—Do you think me so very poor an artificer as that my patient work of nearly twenty years is likely to be blown down by a puff of your flimsy breath?—Silly cur!—I had anticipated your present attempt to palm yourself upon me, even before I entered this house to-night. And now, to begin my course of proof."

He took off the handkerchief which usually half-covered his face, and continued,

"Joseph Fitzgerald, old and faithful servant of my father's house—do you recollect your former master?"

"Oh, sir, sir," answered the man, "great wondher comes upon me with you words.—I don't know what reply to make you!"

"Time has, doubtless, changed me; the weather has pelted on me, and the sun has scorched me. You see before you, however, the master you have long thought dead. Go for your wife, and lead her hither directly."

My wife, you said, sir!" repeated Joseph, looking more and more frightened.

"Yes, man—your wife—did I not speak distinctly?—Tell her that Harry Stokesbury summons her to speak with him. Tell her to remember the evening when young Harry Stokesbury forced Connor Kennedy's brat from her arms; tell her to remember that he then warned her she should be called upon, at a future day to identify the traitor's bantling. Tell her that the time is now come. Retire, I say, and lead your wife up to this room."

He opened the door, and the servant withdrew. He went on to Gerald—

"Yes, son of Connor Kennedy, I will soon demonstrate to you who is, or rather who was your Father, and, how full, and how true, has, therefore, been my revenge. On one point, alone, I have not quite satisfied myself.—Before the very last gasp left his body, he did not know who killed him. Oh!—would that he could have known it! And, trust me, often and often have I pondered to try and arrange that he should be made acquainted with the relationship between him and his executioner. But it was impossible to compass it, without putting both of you on your guard. When

you lay in yonder gaol, too, by my contrivance, another mode of vengeance on him slightly occurred to me. For a moment I thought it might be practicable to change my tactics; to get you tried, convicted, and excellently well hanged for the abduction of Annie Kennedy, making him a witness against you. Then, after your popular exit from this world, I would have just whispered to him the story of your parentage.—But my chief witness, Donnelly, I could not depend upon, at the push; he was what you call a person of bad character, and, besides, any man's servant, either in truth or in falsehood, for the heaviest bribe.—You have yourself heard him admit as much, a few hours ago. But no matter. Although Connor Kennedy could not, lest our plan might fail, get a hint in this world of who it was I doomed to take his life, yet, as very good people say there is another world, perhaps he knows it now. Indeed, for the especial consolation of my heart, never before this hour have I felt half so inclined to be a firm believer on that knotty subject."

Joseph Fitzgerald re-entered, conducting his wife, both agitated and trembling to excess.

"I am tould" began the woman, "there is one here who says he is the Masther Harry Stokesbury?"

"Come hither, dame.—You nursed for a few days Connor Kennedy's and Mary Bryan's first and only son?" The servant assented.

"You have received the message I sent to you this moment by your husband?—You have understood it?"—She again answered affirmatively.

"Well. Examine these things attentively."—He took a small box from his bosom, opened it, and placed it on the table. "Have you seen them before? Are these the clothes in which your own hands clothed Connor Kennedy's son, before you took him to nurse at your house? And do you find upon them the marks which I, Harry Stokesbury, directed you to put upon them, before I dragged your charge over your threshold?"

"Whether it comes to pass that you are Masther Harry Stokesbury or not," she replied, "these are the same clothes Connor Kennedy's son had on him, when Masther Harry Stokesbury took away the child from me."

"So. Look at this, too; can you call this little thing to mind?"

"Oh! mercy be to me! It is the gospel I hung round the infant's neck, to save him from his evil doom," answered the woman.

"Yes!" scoffed Stokesbury, close into Gerald's face. "And thus I learned the fable of your famous doom—the doom I have led you here to-night to accomplish, as I before told you—and learned it from this woman's lips, when by chance I asked the meaning of the silly amulet she had appended to your little carcass. Ha!—And you begin to admit my proofs, do you?—Yes; I see that horror is on your face;—I see that your cheek is livid; I see that a cold sweat trickles down your forehead, and that your limbs totter beneath you. But there is stronger proof of the true nature of the cowardly murder you have just committed. Attend, sirrah; attend, closely—Woman!" he went on aloud, and now imperiously and passionately, "you will recollect that I ordered you to notice a something on the arm of Connor Kennedy's whelp?"

"May the Heavens save us! and it is the same voice I now hear that said the same words to me more than twenty years ago!"

"Right—the same voice, the very same. But did I not order you to note that mark? And when you had done so, did you not call it a cherry-mark, caused you would have me believe, from a cherry having been flung in play at his mother, before his birth? But no matter what you said—was there not a reddish spot of that kind on the young toad's arm?"

"I recollect every word you say, sir.—It is all as fresh to my mind as if it happened but yesterday."

"Examine your arm, then, Gerald Kennedy—I call you at last by your true name. I have, before now, allowed you to peer at *my* arm."

The unhappy young man suddenly sat down, as if from total incapacity to stand; placed his elbows on the table, and fully covered his face with his hands. Tears stole through his fingers, as in a weak and broken voice he said—"The mark is upon my arm."

"And my proof complete!" cried Stokesbury. "Connor Kennedy's murderer, *is* Connor Kennedy's son!—And that son knows as much!—Knows, too, that I set him on to kill his scoundrel parent—and why I did so!—Cur! you have named *me*—Father—and the words came like the serpent's hiss into my ear. For, when you gave me that title, I called to mind that you were the offspring of my direst enemy—that you were of the loathed blood of him who duped, abused, robbed, plundered, branded, banished me! and who had wiled Mary Bryan from my arms!—Oh! spume of the old reptile!—but that I cherished you as my avenger, I could have struck you to my foot, and spurned you, and spat upon you, when you dared so to address me—Ha! but no matter!—From Connor Ken-

nedy's own slime has crawled the younger adder to sting him to the death!—From the tissue of his own infernal plottings have I woven the web of his ruin—insinuating into the middle of it the spider-spawn that was to clutch and strangle its bloated begetter!—Ha!—he taught me—he taught me!—Ay—and for this I brought you up, Gerald Kennedy! No one else, I say to you, again, could have been my executioner upon your Father! Root and branch he withered me: root and branch I have withered him!—True—I bear his brand upon my arm, and his curse still deeper branded into my heart!—True—I walk through the world, a mere shadow of man, cast from an identity that I dare not name or avow. All that is true!——But something is done, now, to reconcile me to my lot!—That loathsome villain's son has shed his blood at my will!—Branded as I am, that son shall be as branded! The high gallows, to be sure, he may escape; for I suppose he will have friends in this little nook to back him! But even if he live, whenever he walks forth, the veriest heart-rotten wretches in existence, and the most virtuous people—the veriest sinners, and the most innocent children—shall join in one cry against him—and that one cry shall be Parricide!"

Gerald Kennedy, as if suddenly recovering his strength, sprang up from the position and attitude in which we have last described him; traces of tears still upon his cheek:—

"Fiend!" he said, "you have, indeed, drawn a terrific, and yet a true picture of the fate of a parricide. Oh, my God!" he continued, flinging himself upon his knees, straining his eyes, and stretching his arms upwards, while the tone of his voice was fervent, and ringing—"Almighty Eye of the universe! behold before thee, an erring, and a humbled being! Accept, Omnipotent, the gratitude of a stricken, bursting heart, which gives thee praise and adoration, because that of parent's blood, or of the blood of any of Thy creatures, I am guiltless—guiltless—guiltless!"

"What say you, worm,—guiltless?" cried Stokebury, starting back.

Gerald Kennedy again sprang to his feet, and drew himself up to the full of his gallant height. A flush of exultation overspread his face, his dark eye flashed a calm defiance, as with energy and grace he continued:

"Yes, guiltless of all taint of blood, I am! Not only guiltless of my father's blood, but standing here my father's protector against the universe! These arms to defend him, and this body as a tower of strength between him and myriads. No, no; I care not if his

enemy be man, or Devil—his Son is able to shield him from all harm."

He paused a moment, a little exausted. Harry Stokesbury only devoured him with his eye, but did not answer.

" Stokesbury—Stokesbury,—you have shown but a slight knowledge of human nature. Stokesbury, although double my age, you have shown that. Do you think, young and strong as I am, I could have submitted so long to your taunts, had not my bosom's innocence supported me against them? Had I really been the murderer of my Father, do you suppose, I could have so tamely listened to your reproaches, in consequence of the act? Tush! no! I listened to you merely because I had an object to attain from your vehemence;—an object, the dearest that interests my present existence. Ay—Stokesbury!—under competent instructions I sought to gain from you—the only man who could supply it—proof, full proof, that I had not the misfortune to be your son. Sir, you are quite right in an observation you made a little while ago. You saw me pale, and weak, and horrified, when you named all the proofs which made me Connor Kennedy's son, supposing me to be his murderer. But again you mistook—you interpreted into the outward show of a guilty conscience, what were only the workings of an affrighted and shocked soul. Yes—my cheek was livid, and the damp was upon my brow. But these signs came simply because I was smitten to the heart as you mockingly but vividly placed before me the portraiture of the hideous crime to which you had provoked me, and of which I felt I might possibly have been guilty! Yes, Stokesbury, the mere idea that I had been on the road to become a parricide made cold the very marrow in my bones—cold—cold—as the northern ice. Stokesbury—when I rushed from your presence, out of the house, to which you last brought me, the spirit you had put into me, and the spirit you had sent with me, did not accompany me far. There was a mild coolness in the breeze of the night which, as it flitted against my burning brow and breast, wafted to me an exorcising human feeling. Such a feeling as could not commit a murder. I paused.—I looked towards the heavens,—the deep-blue sky was thickly strewn with its sparklings of Infinity! Some glorious stars were preeminently large, and bright, and pure; and I thought they might have been some of the many strong eyes of the great God—which we know, are always above us, and around us, looking down, not angrily, but, oh! how much more chidingly than if angry, upon my hellish purpose! And with the thought of Him, Stokesbury, with the suddenly unfolded, and re-expanded idea of

Him, His grace showered upon my heart. I fancied that the stars I had been looking at arranged themselves in the words of some mighty language inscribing across the expanse of the whole firmament—"Thou shalt do no murder!" And I seemed to feel that the bland and odorous breeze became instinct and articulate, and like the whisper of a child—angels syllabled the same command into mine ear! Then, Stokesbury, (and at last I call upon you, in my turn, to listen, for *you* have often called upon *me* this evening to listen to you)—then, Harry Stokesbury, tears burst from my scorching eyes—ay, in torrents did they burst, and I was not, and I am not ashamed of them. My knees, of their own accord, sank under me, and I could pray. And, after having prayed, I could reflect! And the black cloud that you had hung over my soul rolled away from it, like the morning mist from the obscured mountain. Then—then—came the conviction of the enormity of the horrible deed I had left you to perpetrate! I firmly resolved not only to shed no blood of the man whom you said had injured me, but I also resolved—because I feared you, Stokesbury—to hinder you, from shedding his blood by your own hand, or by any other hand, or means—And after this resolution, I was calm enough to proceed to the bed-side of a friend, although a humble one, who, before I knocked as his door, had resigned himself to the quiet of sleep, and a good conscience. He did not prove lukewarm to my summons, or my necessity; we spoke at length together. By his advice, I came here to meet you as I have met you."

"And pray, who is this sage?" demanded Stokesbury;—"and where is he now?"

"I am glad to tell you he is *there*," answered Gerald, pointing to a large folding screen, at one side of the extensive, old-fashioned chamber. As Harry Stokesbury turned his scowling, inquisitive eyes in that direction, they rested upon the spare features of the Mayor of Wind-gap, who, with his osier-wand of office, in his right hand, sedately advanced: immediately followed by a very aged white-headed man, who came forward, leaning on his polished staff, to take his station at the Mayor's right hand; and by a younger personage, who with many obeisances, also assumed his station at the Mayor's left hand. In this order, the three at last stood still, full to the chin of the important business in which they were called on to interfere, and pronounce their judgment.

CHAPTER XX.

On board his fast-scudding ship, Stokesbury's rough-and-ready crew thought little of the boisterousness of their commander, which used to flare out and betray itself in violent words and actions, on trivial occasions. But when he paced his quarter-deck, up and down, taking no notice of them, or of any thing around him; uttering not a word; his brow half-hiding his eye, and his arms folded hard into each other;—when thus they beheld him, the scoundrels would look to their weapons—well knowing from experience that a desperate business was to be engaged in, of the nature of which, however, they were to learn nothing until the moment should arrive for taking it in hand.

Such now was the expression of his knotted brow, such was his calm austerity of manner.

He and Maurteen Maher eyed each other for a moment. His Worship spoke first.

"Yes, Masther Harry Stokesbury, it's tee-totally of my conthrivance. The poor boy came to me, in a great puzzle of mind; and when I coaxed him to tell every thing, the thought entered into my head to advise him to make a purtense of doing what you wanted him to do. Because I guessed that if you were sure the deed was done, you'd be for provin' plain to him that he was the son of the murthered man."

"In the Devil's name, who are you?" demanded Stokesbury, savagely.

"Why, for the matther of that, we'll neither say nor do, make question nor give answer, in the Divil's name. We want to have no rubbins to his sort; we are not his sarvants. More be token, Masther Harry, to remind you that the Divil and myself are no great cronies, didn't I spile sport on him this very night?"

"Who, or what are you, I say?" stamping his foot.

"Don't you remember axin' me that question before now, the night of the last bonfire? And don't you remember the plain answer I made you, Masther Harry?"

"No, fellow! I have no recollection whatever of you. Speak plain, now, and at once, and curse you!"

"Och, as to the curse, *Crossh-a-Chrustha** between you and me,

* Cross of Christ.

and all harm, amin. But it's known to all the neighbours that I hold authority over the Mayor of this town. I have rule of Wind-gap-hill, and I believe that's a step above him, by raison it's on a hoighth, if there was no other raison. And I'm come here to-night, me and my Mayor's council, that you see at ach side o' me, to bring pace and good will, undher God, masther Harry Stokesbury. To fend, and to prove, and to make the right appear clear before the world."

"We'll see the right done, plaze God," said ould Daddy Leeach. And Gregory Roche gave his assent by iterating with a bow, "plaze God!"

Stokesbury continued for a space, staring at the law-givers, as if to make them out, or comprehend the nature of their interference. Suddenly, with a careless shrug, he turned to Gerald Kennedy.

"I neither understand nor care about this mummery," he said, with ill-concealed ferocity. "But you know me as the foe of you and yours. Look to yourself. My arm is over you. Look to yourself."

He strode about the room in the manner we have already described, when on board his pirate ship. He paused. He scrutinized anew the strange group near him. Then slowly and coolly he turned to leave the apartment.

"You cannot pass us yet, Masther Harry," said Maurteen Maher, intercepting him.

"No! and who opposes my free passage?" scoffed Stokesbury.

"I!" answered Maurteen. "But 'tis only for your good, and the good of others. We want to know your intentions, and to make you have good intentions, afore you quit us."

"Out of my way, idiot!" The bravo raised his hand.

The Mayor on his part struck his wand of office sharply against the floor. Stokesbury was instantly seized by four powerful fellows who issued from behind the screen whence his Worship himself had made his appearance. One of them was Meehawl O'Moore, the man of straw, upon the night of the bonfire; another was the young giant who had masqueraded as his female companion, on the same occasion. Stokesbury was so truly taken by surprise that he could offer no resistance; and in a few seconds found himself deprived of his pistols, which he wore in his belt, under his cloak, and of the sinister-looking hanger which dangled at his side.

Directly Stokesbury was secured, and rendered incapable of committing what the Mayor of Wind-gap feared he might commit, namely, an outrage in the house which covered them both, Maurteen com-

manded his satellites to leave the pirate free, loudly adding—"And take yourselves home to Wind-gap, now, as fast as ye can trot, and go to your beds, and sleep away the remainder o' the night, or rather, the morning that's left. But," he added, aside into the ear of Meehawl O'Moore, "Stay in this house, for all that. And if ye do any thing better than another, keep a strict watch on the door of Mr. Kennedy's room. So his efficient, but illegal, bailiffs departed.

The Mayor now regularly turned to the business before him; and, in proceeding with it, proved not only that he had well studied his part, but also the character of the man he had to deal with.

Without at all losing sight of his own dignity, he began by craving Stokesbury's forgiveness for having ordered his detention; explaining himself upon the grounds that he had acted for Stokesbury's own good, as well as of that of every other human being; and that his only objects were the promotion of "pace and quietness, and making the right appear."

For he knew that Stokesbury's deadly and devilish rage against his cousin proceeded from a misapprehension of that cousin's conduct, in all the matters which related to them both. He knew that, by the villanous contrivances of Kyran Donnelly, Harry Stokesbury had been induced to regard Connor Kennedy in the light in which the unfortunate bravo had represented him to Gerald, while urging the young man to become a murderer. He knew that Stokesbury, originally engrossed by an all-absorbing hatred and passion, as well as by his rapid changes from place to place, each being remote from the other, and particularly by the mode of life in which he was now confirmed, had neither had wish nor opportunity to undeceive himself. He knew, in fact, that up to the present moment, he had acted altogether on false impressions. And the peacemaker of Wind-gap now set about placing the true state of the case before Stokesbury's eyes.

The reader is already generally acquainted with the facts necessary to be detailed for the object he had in view, by Maurteen Maher, in order "to make the right appear." But Maurteen did not content himself with mere assertions. Upon each point necessary to be established he was ready, either with proofs or with witnesses. By the very mouth of the person who had drawn up old Stokesbury's will, and who awaited his summons in a contiguous apartment, he demonstrated, not only that Connor Kennedy had not intrigued to have that instrument moulded to his purposes, or in his favour, but that he had endeavoured, by every means, to prevent it from being so framed. Nay, that the very moment it had came into his hands he had destroyed it.

By another evidence, as well as by the production of authenticated accounts, he proved that Connor Kennedy, so far from making use of the yearly proceeds of his cousin's paternal property, had most profitably accumulated them. That, moreover, to the sum thus realized, he had added the unfortunate Mary Bryan's dower, living only upon the pittance of its interest, and destining all as a provision for Stokesbury's daughter Annie.

His Worship of Wind-gap further demonstrated that Connor Kennedy was not to be blamed for his cousin's miserable exposure at the bar of justice; inasmuch as he had been a poor maniac at the time, and for many years subsequently. One of the most important points of his case was that Mary Bryan and Connor Kennedy had been man and wife two months before the drawing of old Stokesbury's will; and that, of course, their marriage had not been brought about in order to accommodate themselves in the Law's eyes to its provisions.

Having gone so far in his case, Maurteen Maher paused a moment, to observe what effect it and his own oratory had produced. When he first began to speak, he saw that he was listened to with lofty, though suppressed, rage, and with withering contempt. To this succeeded a haughty indifference and an air of abstraction, real or assumed. But when the person who had drawn up the will entered the room, and declared what he knew, Stokesbury's look and manner evinced a great and stern surprise. Then he shewed incredulity, then contempt again. He condescended, however, to cross-question this witness, and, finding him firm and consistent, his features, despite of his evident attempts to master them, began to wear an astounded expression.

Connor Kennedy's accounts were laid before him by a confidential clerk. He snatched the books, and examined them with a deep frowning attention; sometimes looking off the columns of figures, straight before him, with a vague stare; or drawing in his lips, or heaving long, hard sighs. When, at length, his investigation had ended, he sat motionless on his chair, his clenched hands resting upon his knees.

The Mayor of Wind-gap, not quite dissatisfied with these signs of the inward workings of the man, judiciously went forward, in course, to the most difficult topic he had to approach and arrange.

He began it by speaking of Kynan Donnelly. Without yet making effective use of him, he dwelt upon his character, as deceptive, lying, venal, and treacherous; appealed to Stokesbury to admit his general assertions, and experienced, at least, no dissent from the m.

He next roundly accused the fellow of treachery towards Stokesbury himself; nay, and of a deeper kind than he had ever practised upon any one else. The listener started up, fully aroused and earnest. Maurteen repeated what he had said, and then divided his accusation into separate charges, the last of which seemed to drive Stokesbury almost frantic.

"Since proofs are so ready to your hand, old man, these things you must prove to me, as clear as the day's light, by Heaven!" he cried.

"Nothin' aisier in life, Masther Harry, dear," replied the Mayor, smiling. But before continuing regularly, he dwelt further upon the heinousness of Donnelly's ingratitude, in being capable of committing towards his old master, and first and best benefactor, deception or wrong of any kind. Maurteen mixed up with all this a due portion of deferential bearing, and a little judicious flattery towards "Masther Harry Stokesbury." "Nothin' aisier in life, as I tould you afore," he repeated; "will the words out of his own mouth bring content to your mind? If we can conthrive, with the little sense the Lord gave us, to have you overhear him confess every thing I lay at his door, what will you think of us, then, Masther Harry?"

In fine, his Worship, with many entreaties, prevailed upon Stokesbury to retire behind the screen, before spoken of. Then he went down stairs, returned with Donnelly by his side, led him close to the screen, and began speaking with him in a tone of voice sufficiently low not to reach the ears of his council and of Gerald Kennedy, who stood at the opposite corner of the room, yet loud enough to convey to Stokesbury every word they interchanged together.

"Kynan Donnelly, every thing is done clever, in the way that you and I layed it out. Harry Stokesbury is in the body of the gaol."

"And you told him that you had me locked up on the same score?" asked the ruffian.

"I tould him so, sure enough.—Just as you bid me do, Kynan, my boy."

"Was there any notion in his head that I turned agin him, in the long run, Maurteen?"

"Musha, aye. Now that you remind me of it, I won't say but there was somethin' o' the kind in his head, honest Kynan. For when Roger Divey, and all the rest o' them, were taking him away to his night's lodging, a little while ago, he turned round to me, and, with a look that frightened me, says he: 'This is Donnelly's

doin's,' says he; 'tell him I know him. Tell him that I found out a thing or two about him, since we last parted. Tell him that I know it was between him and Roger Divey I was sould the night I broke open the Inch-house. Tell him that it was by his contrivance Mary Bryan was married to Connor Kennedy. And tell him over again," says he, "that I'll pay him for all together, before he and I are much oulder."

"Murther and fury! did he spake those words to you, Maurteen Maher?"

"The very words I tell to you he spoke to me."

"By the night that's in it! an' I had a fear all along of his comin' somehow to that knowledge. Oh! if 'tis a thing he gets free this time, I'm a gone man! I would'nt give a rotten *thrauneen* for my own life, if ever he comes again beyond the gaol door. Were the life of ten cats in me, he'd have 'em all: were I hidin' twenty perches under the ground, he'd dig me up, and he'd dhrag me up into the day-light, and another day-light I'd never see."

"You say what's thrue enough, Kynan Donnelly," assented the Mayor of Wind-gap, with very much of the air and manner of a Job's comforter.

"There's but one way left for me to turn. I must jump up on the green cloth, and sware again him on his thrial. I have more knowledge of his ways than 'ud hang twenty men!"

"It's well guessed you have, Kynan. I know, of my own knowledge, that no one can tell betther nor you, who forced off Juff Carroll's daughter."

"It was himself! and I'll prove it agin him. There's no one to stand up for Kynan Donnelly, now, but Kynan Donnelly's four bones."

"And taking away Miss Annie Kennedy, too?" continued Maurteen Maher.

"Yes, and that, too.—I'll swear down all, all I know, to hang him well, well!"

"But if you didn't swear agin him at all, Kynan, it's the like enough he'd forgive you, as Connor Kennedy did."

"Forgive me! oh, never, till the day of judgment, and the day after it, into the bargain. If *he* knows *me* as, he says, *I* know *him*."

"But, sure, he'd understand, now, after twenty years, at laste, there was no great blame to be laid to you for bringing about the marriage between Mary Bryan and Connor Kennedy? Didn't he give you good cause for a little revenge of that kind, a short while afore?"

"Who tould you o' that?" demanded Donnelly, in surprise.

"Oh! I was good friends with your poor Nance Dunney. I had a liking for her as well as yourself, and I could have found it in my heart to give a helping hand at the killing o' Masther Harry, when he brought the destruction on her young head. Sure, as I said afore, you had some right to make Mary Bryan turn away from him, when he took Nance Dunney from you."

"I know there was little blame to me for doing what I did. I had a long love for Nance, and I'd do any thing, at that time, to be even with him, on her account."

"No wondher, no wondher. And, sure, if you hadn't tould him all them stories about Connor Kennedy, Masther Harry and he would have come together again, in the long run, and you would have been found out, wouldn't you?"

"Ay, ay; and they'd lay their heads together, and I'd be done for instead of Connor Kennedy."

"There's little doubt of that, I believe," again agreed the Mayor, gravely nodding at him. "And wasn't it the same thing over again, the night heubroke into the Inch-house? Sure, if Roger Divey and yourself hadn't brought the army on him, he'd have soon come to the bottom of the whole business?"

"There's no denyin' it, Maurteen Maher."

"Well, well," continued Maurteen, more gravely, and even ominously: "and I'm not far asthray, Kynan Donnelly, if what you're afther sayin' dosen't turn out to be enough *to make the blind get back their eye-sighth.*"

While laying particular emphasis on these last words, Maurteen allowed, as if by chance, his wand of office to tap against the screen. And while Donnelly was gazing at the Mayor, to try and ascertain the cause of his altered tone and manner, his eyes followed those of his Worship, and rested on the person of Harry Stokesbury.

The effect produced upon the scoundrel was inexpressible. He saw that he was betrayed on every side, that the man whose power he regarded as almost unbounded, and whose retaliation he well knew to be terrible, was now in full possession of his villanous practices. He could not withdraw his glance from that of the object of his dread, which became immediately and sternly, fixed on his. His cheeks and lips grew ashy-livid, and his limbs shook till they smote each other.

"I have been listening to you," said Stokesbury, in a deep, guttural under-voice, "and I need not tell you I will answer you."

He re-commenced his former hasty pace about the room, while Donnelly staggered into a corner. A few paces from the spot to which Donnelly had retired, he stopped—turned his regards on the floor, and seemed wrapped up in his thoughts. Suddenly the wretch's eye caught the pistol flung away by Gerald Kennedy. He cringed down cautiously for it; and, his sole impulse being now to rid himself of the fearful man whom he had aroused to vengeance—the weapon was instantly at Stokesbury's ear. Gerald Kennedy sprang forward, and seized, and bore down his arm.

"What!" muttered Stokesbury to himself, "is such an action possible from that boy?—Is it really possible from what they call their human nature?" And he looked on with a stern, half-smiling curiosity and interest.

"Let go my arm," said Donnelly, in a shivering whisper, as if he spoke confidentially what he deemed worthy of attention from the person he addressed. "Let go my arm!—didn't you hear the words he said? I remember well they were the same he spoke when he made up his mind to kill Connor Kennedy. Let go my arm, I say."

Gerald still only endeavoured to wrest the pistol from him.

"By the fire of Hell, then!" roared Donnelly, forgetting his former intention, and suddenly fixing his vengeance on the person who had crossed him:—"Your life or my life for it!"

They struggled again. Stokesbury took a half step forward, as if to interfere, and by one twist of his arm end the dispute; but, keenly eyeing the vigorous efforts of Gerald, he arrested himself, still curiously smiling. We have said that Meehawl O'Moore and his three sub-bailiffs, had retired to do duty in a remote part of the house. Old Joseph Fitzgerald had for some time also withdrawn, to share his terrors with his wife. So that, except Stokesbury, and the Mayor of Wind-gap and his council, no one was now present to interrupt the deadly tug which went on. Stokesbury, however, would not interrupt it. And when old "Daddy Leeach" courageously, though impotently, and when Gregory Roche, politely, though in a very cowardly fashion, made signs of peace-making, Maurteen Maher, giving way, notwithstanding "the little sense that the Lord had blessed him with," and that the "neighbours" had avouched he possessed, to the leaven of superstition imbedded in his habits, authoritatively waved his wand, and cried out—

"No, Shawn Leeach! No, Gregory Roche! Let each man o' ye keep back! It is his doom! It is his doom, that he's working through! it is the hour of his doom that is coming upon him! He

will kill, or he'll be killed on the spot! Let no man meddle with his doom!"

Daddy Leeach and Gregory Roche could, therefore, only look on, during the exciting contest; the snowy head of the former, universally palsied with great anxiety, and the latter, ejaculating, in fear or in admiration, at intervals.

But the Mayor of Wind-gap spoke most and loudest. "Gorsoon," said he, "your hour is come! Mind yourself! mind yourself, Gerald Kennedy! He is a sthrong man you're wrastling with—your life is at the risk, boy! Oh, Mother of God! you are doing a foolish thing now! Take your hand from his throath!—and hould *his* hand, that has got the pistol in it! Och! och! och! He does not heed me! It is at your head, now, Gerald Kennedy! Och! the Lord be with you! but no,—the pistol wasn't cocked, or you were dead! And now he's cocking it with his teeth! Take your hand from his throath, I bid ye!—take your hand from his throath!"

The combatants here fell on the floor together. Gerald Kennedy under Donnelly; and a cry of terror burst from the Mayor and his council. A second time Henry Stokesbury stepped forward, perhaps, to the young man's aid. But before he could manifest his intentions, the pistol exploded. For an instant, Gerald and Donnelly were hidden by its smoke. Then the former jumped up, unhurt, shaking from him the dead body of his antagonist. It was, however, the wretch's own finger which had pulled the trigger of the weapon: without knowing it, its muzzle had been pointed to his own head.

The Mayor and his wise men hurried to Gerald, and overpowered him with congratulations. Then they turned to observe Stokesbury. His eyes were riveted upon the youth, with, Maurteen Maher thought, something like a manly and generous expression.—Nay, the old philosopher of Wind-gap deemed that "Masther Henry" appeared half-inclined to step forward, and shake him by the hand. But Joseph Fitzgerald, if possible still more terrified than ever, re-entered the room, and with "from your cousin, Mr. Kennedy, sir," presented a letter to his old master.

Stokesbury tore open the seal, read the letter, and stood motionless, in the middle of the apartment. Moisture stole over his forehead, which he wiped off with his spread palm. He read the epistle again. He clasped his hands over the crown of his head; he dragged them down, slowly, and pressed them tight across his eyes. They unclasped themselves, and he quickly, and often glanced towards Gerald.—He seemed indecisive,—uncharactered;—or, we

might more properly say, perhaps, begining to be re-charactered. After another short pause, he walked suddenly to the lad—seized both his wrists, and wrung them. Then turned as suddenly to Maurteen Maher, and whispered a word to him. Then said to Joseph Fitzgerald,—my answer is—" No, not to-night." And after this, he slowly quitted the apartment, and the house.

CHAPTER XXI.

EARLY the next day, Maurteen Maher, pretending that it was a favourable one for the sport," buckled on his fishing-basket, and, with his angle in his hand, sauntered slowly down the river's bank. Brother-sportsmen thought him grown very unsagacious of a sudden, however; for they remarked that the sun shone hotly upon the water, and the most foolish young trout beneath its surface would have sense enough to remain, till the cool of the evening at least, as near the bottom of the river as possible. But, careless of these criticisms, the Mayor pursued his way, and might be seen, at a little distance from Wind-gap screwing together his fishing-rod, and gravely making all necessary preparations for engaging in his favourite pastime. The only persons who ventured to vindicate the sanity of his proceedings, after he had turned his back on his subjects, were his council Shawn Leeach and Gregory Roche. Then it became publicly whispered that he and they had been stricken—" the three o' them together," and at one and the same time, with a very singular want of common sense: great was the sensation of awe and regret thereby impressed upon "the neighbours." Nor was it till the real object of old Maurteen's ramble, that day, became guessed at, some time after, that he and his superior law-givers were reinstated in popular confidence.

At a lonely spot, by the river's side, about a mile from his commonwealth, Maurteen encountered a man, carefully disguised, in a great coat, bushy wig, and an uncouthly-shaped hat. They seemed to meet by previous appointment. While they spoke at length together, Maurteen, in a cautious voice, and the other in a broken, half-wailing one, they took the private path to the house at the Inch, and, unobserved by any persons, entered it at the rear.

We next find Maurteen seated at the curiously-carved table, in

the curiously-furnished room of which, on a former occasion, we have had a passing knowledge. Henry Stokesbury sits opposite him, and they are alone.

The countenance of the old diplomatist, nothwithstanding a previous resolution to keep it calm and impassive, was sharpened and lengthened into a curious expression of shrewed investigation and reasoning, of doubting, and hoping, and balancing, of gratified good-feeling, and of wary anxiety. The character of that of the pirate we scarce venture to indicate. Its sternness, its fierceness, its sneer, its recklessness, its daring, still remained stamped upon it. Yet these qualities of his mind and habits might, perhaps, be said at present to be exteriorly legible, rather from the effects of their former physical manifestation, than from any present play of them. Oftener than in his life before, his eagle glances were half veiled beneath his falling lids, or else drooped upon the floor. He sat quieter, and more thoughtfully than usual: above all, his voice was modulated, generally speaking, into sounds that did not startle, or offend, or grate on the ear of a listener. Although, now and then, Maurteen found that the most slightly-injudicious word or question, or something not clearly understood, or else caught up without sufficient examination, was enough to bring an echo of the old explosions round his head.

The two had for some time been conversing. They continued, after a pause; old Maurteen leading the discourse, as, indeed, he had done since they sat down together.

"In the name of Him who is ever ready to forgive us all, you had betther see that man, Masther Harry, *a chorra*. Just let me send to the town for him—won't you?"

"No.—But I do not refuse, because I do not forgive.—Tush—I have nothing to forgive—nothing, to a human creature, except myself. 'Tis not that;—no! But I cannot bring myself to look upon his face. 'Twas always hateful to me: how can it become pleasing to me of a sudden?

"No, Masther Harry, I ax your pardon for bein' unmannerly enough to make a contradiction. But, long afore it grew hateful to you, it was plasin' to you. And for a good rason—it had a great likeness to another one you loved dearly—to your own mother's."

"Hum—that is true." He turned aside his head, and remained without speaking a moment; then resumed—"but no, no—curse it, no! Be silent old fellow, on that point in future. Let us now end all our business. You can lead the girl back into the town.

She prefers it to leaving Ireland with me. So let her have her way. I deserve it too from her. Pshaw! I deserve everything.—As to your sister's affair—take her too, and settle it and her, as you like. Here's a little bag of old gold for her. Buy up your Mayoralty of Wind-gap with it, and share the estate between ye."

"Buy up Wind-gap with it, Sir?" smiled, nay, almost laughed, nay, almost grinned, the Worshipful Maurteen Maher, unconsciously descending, a moment, from his staid point of habitual, self-commanding gravity. "And do you think there is enough o' goold in it for that same?"

"Poh, nonsense! don't annoy me further upon a matter already settled."

Maurteen weighed the money-bag between his hands, and drew a long sigh.

"It's a truth," he resumed, "that there must be a great dale o' the goold in it, but I'll tell you what's come into my mind, Masther Harry. I covet no more out of it, nor out o' you, than what will keep my poor sisther from wantin' the bare bread, while she's alive on this arth, repentin' of her sins; and if there's more than that in the little bag, I'd rather not take it home with me."

Stokesbury laughed. "Oh, yes! I see. You think 'tis money not honestly come by; and, therefore, you won't have it, lest it should turn into bits of slate in your hands. Well, well, as you like. Keep no portion of it you don't think yourself entitled to, but hand over the conscientious surplus to your priest. He, I suppose, will know what to do with it."

"If you mane," answered Maurteen, "to help the poor priest of our chapel, and the poor chapel itself, Masther Harry, I don't see a betther thing you could do with any odds and ends ye may have to spare. He's a poor little ould man, God knows. And as to the poor little ould chapel, too, the rain does be dhroppin' down through the rotten thatch of its roof, over his bald head, while he says Mass to us of a Sunday. An' sure when you'd have the prayers of the Christhians for a good action of that sort, twouldn't be money thrown away, supposin' you were a man as free from sin as the child is that never was born."

"Folly, I say, old oddity. I don't want your preachments to-day. I've been thinking of one thing or another without your help. Take charge of this second little canvass bag, and share it as you like, between your two chaplains, below there—your loyal one and your Popish one. And hark ye, just tell them both to serve it out,

amongst such poor Devils as the world—mark ye, as the world—thinks want it least."

"The Lord reward ye!" muttered Maurteen piously, and heart-touched; for he saw that under the words and manner of Harry Stokesbury, there was still something like a conviction of wrong, and a wish for, at least, earthly atonement. "The Lord reward ye, as ye deserve to be rewarded, from your present feelings."

"Amen, old man!" said Stokesbury, hastily, and his companion scarce heard his words, nor was he himself quite conscious of them.

"What did you say, Masther Harry?"

"Nothing, nothing. But here's a little silk purse, full enough of guineas, too, that you are to leave at the door of a foolish man here, one Carroll, I think. There may be other people in this neighbourhood who imagine I have annoyed them; and for their whims also, there is provision enough under my hands, at your Worship's service. So now stuff the only fishes you have caught to-day into that ridiculous looking basket on your back. As Annie is clamourous for your protection into the town—a curious old fellow you must be, by the way, to make us all so dependent on you—you may go look for her through the house. You'll find her in some chamber, closeted with your sister—whom she has already made a saint of—and that Juff Carroll's daughter, and Juff Carroll's niece into the bargain. And then you may lead the whole bevy where ye like, and do whatever you wish with them. Quick, quick! for I have something else to think of before night."

"But your own daughter won't lave the house, without seeing you, Masther Harry?" queried Maurteen.

"Oh, yes, yes, she will! She does not wish to see any more of me, she wishes, from her heart," he added, in the most natural tone which Maurteen had yet heard him utter, "she wishes from her heart that she had never, never seen me, or heard of me."

"And I'll be bound, you are wrong again, Masther Harry, in saying that. I have a way of my own, in finding out what a body thinks of another body; and I know one thing this moment—Miss Annie would cross the says with you, from Ireland's ground, if she could only hear you tell that the boy she loves and likes was to be at her side; and understand from you, moreover, where ye were all goin' to live, and what ye were all to do for a livin' when ye get there."

Stokesbury laughed again, but not heartily, nor with his usual expression. "What absurdity!" he said. "As for that lad, and Annie, why should I hinder their coming together? But as for

the other question, I have already answered *you* by saying, I would never answer *it*, old fellow. It will be enough for you all to know that wherever I go, or whatever I do, when for the last time I leave my native country—and that too, in a few hours—I will not go where I have gone before, and I will not do what I have done before."

"The Lord be praised for them words, and keep ye in your own good resolution, Masther Harry, *a chorra*," exclaimed old Maurteen, tears starting from his eyes as he steadfastly and compassionately regarded him.

"What! you old fool," cried Stokesbury, smiling gruffly, as their glances met, "do you mean to make me think that I shall leave a single human being behind me, in Ireland, whose eye can moisten at a recollection of me, or of my fate or fortune?"

"I do, Masther Harry, I do!" answered Maurteen, standing up, impassioned—"and I tell you more than that. I tell you that you'll lave friends at home—here, near the old house at the Inch—that will think of you, and have compassion for you, and pray for a forgiveness for you, to their dying day. And I tell you that I am one of them friends. Will you shake my ould hand and let me hear from your lips that ye b'lieve what I say is the truth?"

Instead of waiting to receive the hand that he had asked for, Maurteen suddenly took, and wrung it. Stokesbury, still seated, stared at him. Then, with a half-sneer, half-smile, he averted his face, while he returned the old man's grasp.

"And, och, I'm only the last, and the laste worthy of them friends," continued Maurteen. "Come in, Miss Annie, come in! Avoch! sure you're another of them, an' many steps higher than me, even if I were sated in my chair, on the top of Wind-gap itself! And come in, Miss Annie, wid the better friend than all, that's now at your side."

Maurteen spoke this close to the door; it was timidly and slowly opened, and Harry Stokesbury saw his daughter enter the room, supporting on her arm a tall, worn man, whose head and shoulders, drooped and bent prematurely forward, whose face was pale, and greatly agitated, and whose step was nervously unsure. He slowly arose; approached the agitated girl, and, in answer to her unexpected proffer, touched with his lips, in surprise, in deep feeling, and almost in confusion, her tearful cheek.

"And who is your friend, Annie?" he asked.

"*Your* cousin, father;" she answered, with fresh tears. "Your cousin, Connor Kennedy."

He started back to a great distance, not in avoidance, or dislike, but evidently in utter amazement, and perhaps sympathy.

"What! that man Connor Kennedy! That man, the Connor Kennedy, now only in the prime of life as to years, who, when I saw him last, was so tall, and so straight, and so comely!"

"Yes, Masther Harry, that is the man," said Maurteen Maher.

"Yes, Harry, I am the man, the man that loved you then, as he loves you now, without a difference as to time, or chance, or accident. Harry Stokesbury, my dear cousin, forgive me, and take my hand."

"Forgive you, Connor! *I* forgive *you?*"

Stokesbury, quite thrown off his guard, seized the hands that were outstretched to him. These hands he felt gradually free themselves, and glide along his arms, to his shoulders. Almost in spite of himself, at the moment, though not afterwards with regret to his recollections, he once more embraced the cousin whom in early life he had loved with somewhat of the protecting love man feels for woman.

A few words close our story. After some conversation, Stokesbury placed in Connor Kennedy's hands the legal, documental proofs of his marriage in a foreign country, with the mother of his daughter, Annie—together with a detail of the circumstances which had caused their separation almost immediately after marriage, and her return to Europe. And Connor Kennedy explained the chances, and the means, by which he had become acquainted with the almost destitute state of the degraded lady, and had had it in his power to succour her, and upon her death, to adopt her orphan girl.

Annie was not present during this explanation.

"That girl," observed Stokesbury, suddenly, "will never become your son's wife, if she knows that she is the child of a really degraded father. So guard well from her some points of the history of my life, Connor. At least till they are married."

"All that you wish shall be done," replied Kennedy. And though you cannot stay with us, Harry, shall we not hear from you, when you are settled abroad?"

"Do you really wish it?" asked Stokesbury.

"Oh, God knows, God knows I do," he replied, clasping his hands, and looking upwards with streaming eyes.

"You shall, then," resumed the other, tightly grasping his arm—and Maurteen thought he observed the first glistening of moisture upon the lids of the outcast.

Connor Kennedy did afterwards hear from Harry Stokesbury, and to his satisfaction.

That night, a coach-and-four was seen, at a late hour, to dash furiously away from the house at the Inch, by a peasant, who chanced, upon some extreme case of necessity, to be out of his bed at the time. This observer reported that the coach was black; that the horses were black; that the two very ill-favoured, grinning postillions, who shouted furiously, as they cracked their whips, and made their horses gallop along, were also very nearly black; that the horses snorted fire, to say nothing of their pawing it up out of the road,—and that the wheels were encircled with ribbonsof flame. And other things related of this sudden and mysterious departure, left, after due consideration, upon the minds of the dwellers near the Inch-house, the belief that its "strange Man" had all along been connected with no creditable acquaintances, who, at last, had come to claim him, and lead him home. Some, indeed, objected to his having been waited upon with a carriage, remarking that "them kind of folk" need not have used any such means to make sure of his person. But the majority easily explained this away, by making the Devil allow him a stylish turn-out at his exit from this world, in polite deference to the rank which he had held in it. While a few knowing ones, who would be original enough to differ from this judgment, suggested that the carriage might have been driven up to the door of the house, in order to wheedle him into a seat in it, and then had whirled him off, against his will.

These charitable conclusions seemed afterwards corroborated by some awful occurrences. Just facing the celebrated house, at the opposite side of the river, stood a large granite rock, and nearly under its shadow dwelt the largest trout in the river; nearly all "sieve-makers," in Maurteen Maher's parlance. After night-fall of a fine evening was the best time to take these esteemed denizens of the water. Well. A certain gigantic smith, Shawn Mulligan by name, and his son Pandye, were great frequenters of this popular angling station. During the night of the suspicious journey of the strange Man, they had been fishing there as usual, when lo! of a sudden, Shawn was dragged up to the top of the rock, and from his elevation beheld, looking across the river, flashes of fire ascend from the ground round the Inch-house, and running and capering through them, the figure of a man, who tossed his arms on high in a most fearful manner. Thenceforward, never did Shawn or his

son, or any one, on whom they had influence, venture near the granite rock after night-fall.

But another person, who unfortunately had not heard this tale of terror, occupied the same spot, a few nights afterwards. While in the very act of casting his line over a trout that rolled in the water, he said, like a "gear ould dog," he was suddenly seized by the skirts of his coat, and pulled backwards with a force that nearly dragged not only the skirts out of that coat, but the back bone out of his own body. All the while that the most devilish shouts and laughter were let loose into his ears. Need it be added, that as soon as this ill-treated angler found himself free, he took to his heels, halted not till he had gained unhaunted ground; and thence plodded the rest of his way homeward, to warn all his neighbours against visiting the unholy place on the river's side; no matter though at the loss of the finest trout that ever swam in the said river!

These terrible incidents, coupled with the Strange Man's still more terrible departure from the house at the Inch, and, indeed, with the vicinity of the dreaded house itself, soon left the famous rock pretty generally unvisited. In fact, only one individual continued to have the hardihood to resort to it during the stilly nights of summer. Great, indeed, was his courage, the neighbours thought; for no one seemed more impressed than himself with the perils there to be encountered. For many a long year, however, he turned to a good account his monopoly of this station. And often, and often, when Gerald Kennedy and his wife strolled after night-fall along the banks of their beautiful stream, they would surely stop and have a chat, under the huge pile of granite, with Maurteen Maher, the Mayor of Wind-gap.

NOTES TO THE MAYOR OF WIND-GAP.

NOTE, *Chap.* 1, *p.* 8.

NOTE FOR THE BEHOOF OF FOLLOWERS OF OLD ISAAC WALTON.

I will commence my notes to the "Mayor of Wind-gap," with a gossip for anglers. "A Wrinkle," as it is called in sportsman's phrase. Those not of the brotherhood will, doubtless, regard this note as little worth; the followers of the "gentle craft," will, however, snatch at a hint, whenever offered. So to my "brothers of the angle" I dedicate my "wrinkle."

On the banks of the "crystal Nore," the "water without mud," be it borne in mind, Maurteen Maher, the Mayor of Wind-gap, first made acquaintance with the readers of the foregoing tale, while engaged angling for trout. Appended to his angling line, and technically named his "tail fly," was the imitation of a certain insect, known to local anglers, as the "green drake;" with this he had beguiled into his pannier the five pound fish unscientifically described by him as a "sieve-maker."

The uninitiated may probably suppose that because Maurteen Maher named his "tail fly" a "green drake," that of a verity he had enticed the sieve-maker from the water, by the agency of a *bona fide* drake of a "green colour;" but if the general reader care to look on with me, while Maurteen fabricates his "green drake," his misapprehension will be disabused.

On the evening previous to his encounter with George Blundell and Annie Kennedy, the Mayor of Wind-gap had taken from the surface of the river, three insects of green hue, and with greenish gossamer wings—the first of the season he had observed. The appearance of this peculiar insect, fixes the month at which the tale opens, as the hawthorn-scented days closing the month of May. Maurteen Maher had been on the look out for these flies; he knew, from previous observation, the probable time of their birth as winged creatures. And on the evening of the 27th of May he made his capture.

Nor did he not come on this evening unprovided with a place of imprisonment for his captives. The terminating portion of a cow's horn, bottomed at the broadest end, with a cork fitted to the smaller, and perforated with holes to admit light and air. Into this he conveyed them gently and cautiously and corked them in.

In Maurteen Maher's thatched and ozier partitioned Mayor's mansion-house on Wind-gap-hill, there was, up on the loft, a small apartment used as a workshop, when following any of his various handicraft occupations; this little enclosure, rather than room, had a window of four small

panes of glass, immediately beneath the straw eve; it was hung on hinges made of leather, and was opened, when Maurteen invited the morning sun to shine in, or the midday breeze to temper the ardency of the noontide heat. Immediately beneath the window was a contrivance, which he called "a falling leaf," that is, two well planed deal boards ledged together, which lay flat against thewall when not wanted, and were occasionally raised up as a table.

The morning following the imprisonment of the three insects, when the sun had well risen, and peered from the east into the little open casement, Maurteen, having raised his "falling leaf," seated himself thereat. The inlooking sun must have been puzzled, if he wished to ascertain the nature or purpose of the medley, strewn over the falling leaf. A collection of rubbish it would appear to be, to the uninstructed in angling mysteries, but dear to Maurteen Maher as the apple of his eye.

There was scarce an animal clothed in fur, from the "rugged Russian bear," or the silky haired goat of Cashmere, to the Irish "grawnogue" or hedgehog, that had not contributed to the heap. Rats, cats, dogs, hogs, mice, had all made offerings to the heterogeneous store. There was scarce a bird, or fowl, foreign or indigenous, part of whose plumage could not be found in the treasured collection. There was hogs' wool and mohair dyed of every possible hue; mingled with all those, scraps of gold and silver lace glistened. There were ribbon ends of all colours; there were little boxes of cobbler's wax; there were needles and pins, and scissors, and pen-knife; in fact, it would be no easy task to particularize the unintelligible medley strewing Maurteen Maher's falling leaf, and over which he chuckled.

The first proceeding on the part of the owner of this medley, when he had seated himself comfortably at his work-board, was to unravel from a pale yellow ribbon end, some of the silk thread interwoven in the fabric. This he divided into lengths, and waxed it in an artistic manner, with wax fitted to the temperature of the day.

This done, he brought from the recesses of an old pocket-book a real Limerick hook of the proper size, the point and temper of this he proved, and laid it near the waxed silk; then he provided a length of fishing gut, and knowingly indenting the end with his teeth, placed it near his hand. He spread out a sheet of white paper immediately before him, and nodded his head in self-approval of his proceedings so far.

His preparations having been made, he brought forth from his fishing pannier near at hand, the perforated horn in which he had confined the insects taken from the water, and removing the cork, allowed them to promenade before his observant eye, over the sheet of paper he had spread as the review field. Closely and diligently did he scrutinize them, noting their motions, their shape, and most particularly remarking their hue. The better to arrive at certainty, as to the last named characteristic, he took them up one after the other, very tenderly, by the filmy wings, and held each in succession between his eye and the morning light. His face while so engaged, studious and contemplative, significant of the importance he attached to this portion of his study.

Satisfied with the conclusion he had arrived at, Maurteen, permitting the objects of his examination to move over their parade-ground, to flutter their wings, to whisk their tails, and congratulate themselves on

their restoration to liberty, sang forth, in a subdued key, a favourite ditty of his, "Shule aroon," and so sang as a cat purrs, in self-congratulation.

From the heap of litter before him, the Mayor of Wind-gap took a pinch of glistering white hog's wool, then one of pale yellow mohair, coloured by himself in a decoction of "buoy moor." To these two ingredients he added a pinch of green mohair; next, from a portion of hare skin, he plucked the long hairs that project above the inner fur. Between the fingers and thumbs of both hands he manipulated all until the different components were intimately combined, and placing one of the insects on the interwoven ingredients, he held both, so in contact, up to the light. So precise was he in forming his decision, as to the exact identity of hue between his model and his combination of fur, that he wetted the latter, to ascertain to what extent the water in which it was to be used would change the colour—and "Shule aroon" swelled louder, denoting increased satisfaction.

From the dried skin of a rabbit's face, the operator clipped off three taper hairs of the protruding whiskers, and these, having first secured the fishing-gut to his "real Limerick hook," he fastened on at the hook's bow, to represent the three whisks of the insect he copied. Twisting the mingled furs he had so carefully compounded round the silk thread he had waxed, he wound it along the hook's shank, neatly and gradually tapering it as he wound on; below the termination of the fur he wound thrice—the neck feather of a dappled cock, stained to an alive color—these protruding forward he designed as legs—from the barred feather of a drake, dyed a greenish yellow, he plucked a portion, and fastened it; to give an imitation of wings; and shaping the fastened part of the feather, so as to resemble a head, he knotted his silk firmly, and clipped it off. With a nedle point he cunningly arranged the combination of furs and feathers, and clipped with his scissors, until his now perfected "green-drake" was trim, and spruce, and shapely, He placed his finished imitation in contact with the still promenading insects, to prove their similitude; took up the "green drake" he had fabricated so skilfully, and kissed it, in token of self-gratulation of his success as a skilful imitator. This done, he held the stage on which his insects had exhibited before him—the sheet of paper—to his open casement, and, with a puff of his breath, sent his captives forth into the air to flutter their gossamer wings and balance themselves with their long whisks in the morning sunshine, while, in thorough self-appreciation, he sung out "Shule aroon"—à pleine gorge.

Now, "Brother of the Angle," you have had your "wrinkle," I request you will "make a note of it," to serve you on a future occasion; for, depend on it, if you follow the Mayor of Wind-gap's plan of entomological study, having the same ulteriorobject in view, and adopt his mode of practical application, you will be benefited in the pursuit of your pastime.

The aquatic insect, so carefully examined by Maurteen Maher, is known to the English disciples of Isaac Walton as the May May-fly, Maurteen Maher dubbed it a "green-drake," because he used a stained drake's feather to imitate the wing, and it is the "May-fly" in Isaac Walton's own country, because it invariably makes its appearance when jovial May has reached to full maturity, and is leading forward the more ardent June.

TheMay-fly, or green-drake, as the most remarkable of its species, gives the scientific name, "Epemera," or short-lived, to a numerous class of insects. It is known to naturalists, that flies generated beneath the water undergo the same series of transformations as those belonging exclusively to *terra firma;* that from ovæ they become larvæ, from larvæ they change to pupæ, and that from pupæ they are transformed to winged insects, having all the characteristics denoted by the generic term insect. Also, that the ovæ, from which the ultimate insects first proceed, shortly after reaching the bed of the water, on the surface of which they have been cast, become larvæ. And also, that in the larva state, they quickly form for themselves elongated cases, or tubes, smooth within, circular for the entire length, and protected on the outside by minute particles of gravel, firmly cemented. The stucture of these tubes, and adaptation to their purpose, would, of itself, be worthy of study, but would render my "angler's wrinkle" unseasonably diffuse. So long as they are larvæ, these tubes are their dwellings, within which they retire for repose, or to avoid danger.

When about to leave the pupa state, the larva seals up his tube at the open end, and within the closed cell undergoes his third change of being.

Perforating the sealed end, the pupa comes forth and ascends to the surface of the water: almost immediately, it casts off its outward skin, rejecting even an encasement covering the whisks at the termination of the body—and the almost aerial wings; and, for the first time, exists in our atmosphere.

From its appearance as an insect above the water, to the termination of its upper-world being, is no more than six hours, and hence the generic name, "Ephemera."

Its only purpose as a flutterer in our air is to reproduce its species—that provision of nature accomplished, it ceases to live.

When the pupa, from its dwelling in the water, ascends upward to another medium, it comes particularly under the notice of the angler—because in this last stage of its existence, it is the chosen food of the trout, and on its successful imitation the angler depends for success. I have laid before my brother piscators, Maurteen Maher's mode of procedure, and recommend his *modus operandi* as worthy of being followed.

In the month of February, the first Ephemeræ are observed sailing with the current of the river. When the sky is sombre and the sunshine feeble, the Ephemeræ of February are of a sombre, leaden hue. Far into the middle of March this sobriety of tint prevails. As the sun gains power, calling on the buds and leaves to put forth, the emerging insect becomes lighter in colour, until, in joyous May, it is of a brilliant yellow. The angler is to note this change—and follow it in his imitation, as Maurteen Maher did—if he would not "toil all day and catch no fish."

The variation in the hue of the insect, be it known, is all important, and the ability to discover this, and reproduce it a *desideratum.* It is known to all followers of Isaac Walton, that the trout, when they break the water into circles, while snatching the ephemeræ from the surface, make preference of one hue before any other. If the angler does not discover the exact colour of this fashionable diet, he will whip the stream to no effect. Therefore, let me conclude this long wrinkle by again pointing to Maurteen Maher as a guide, and by saying—"Go and do likewise." Good-by to you, brother of the angle.

I have described the "Mayor of Wind-gap" as he was described to me, by one, within whose remembrance he lived. I have given the real names and the characters of his official councillors, as I got them ; and the inauguration at the bonfire is not an invention, but a true representation of the actual civic installation,

Not without good reason did the people of "Wind-gap" boast of the longevity-giving properties of the air of their suburb. This tenacity of life extended to my own day. I remember a crusty old fellow, Bartholomew Carroll, a wicked tippler by the way, who being a century old at the time, I have seen declaring war against the world at large, while he supposed himself to be "as great as a lord," being drunk enough to license th elevation.

A nephew of Maurteen Maher I remember well. He had no flesh on his bones, when I knew him, and the jesters of his neighbourhood called him "Skin him alive." Billy Maher was his proper name. He inherited the Mayor of Wind-gap's love of Angling, without his uncle's skill. Billy Maher had gone five years into the second century of his life, when he died.

At the present moment of writing this note Paddy Maher, the son of Billy Maher, is alive. He was servant with my father in my childhood, and used to jaunt me in the coal scuttle for my recreation. Paddy Maher, the grand-nephew of "Maurteen Maher, the Mayor of Windgap," is at the present time a post-office messenger, conveying letters between the village of Gowran and the village of Whitehall, in the county of Kilkenny, and approaching close to his ninetieth year, walking fourteen miles per day with his wallet at his hip.

Verily the descendants of the "Mayor of Windgap" are patriarchs, as regards longuanimity."

Note page 48.

The house, over the half-door of which Alderman Split-fig dispensed his judgments, may still be pointed out in Kilkenny. It is a two-story corner house, at one side of the street or lane leading to the Black Abbey. Alderman Split-fig's mode of administering justice is told as told to me by an eye-witness. Alderman Split-fig's name was Carpenter. Roger Divey is the real name of his worship's bailiff and brains carrier ; the person and characteristics of Roger I have described on the authority of a cotemporary.

Note page 189.

I have had occasion, in my notes to "Crohoore of the Bill-hook," to make particular reference to the house at the Inch, given as the residence of Harry Stokesbury in this tale of the "Mayor of Wind-gap." During the mayoralty of Maurteen Maher, a person of dire evil repute occupied the house at the "Inch." I could give that person's name, but this should not be done as descendants of his exist.

It is certain, that this reprobate character quitted the house at the "Inch" suddenly and at dead of night, and in a coach drawn by four horses. Taking the repute of the neighbourhood, the coach was horsed by fiends, fiends being the postillions, and riding fiends ; the journey terminating as the final journey of the wicked must of necessity terminate.

It is a fact, that the night following the unhallowed departure from "Inch-house," two anglers wading in the stream—yet known by fisher-

men as "Purcell's Inch Stream"—beheld, on the summit of a rock directly opposite—a rock in which a closely imitative echo dwells—a lurid, supernatural flame suddenly flash upward, fade away, and again and again appear and disappear each time, this flame cast its light on the water, a figure of human shape was lighted up, working its limbs as if struggling with its fate, shouting and moaning fearfully, while so struggling. The two anglers, father and son they were; whitesmiths by profession, identifying the appearance on the rock with the infernal journey from the "Inch-house" the night before, hastened from the river to terra firma—the son devoutly bearing his father on his back. It is true that both raced into the town, as speedily as their limbs gave warrant for; and it is certain that for some time following, Maurteen Maher had the fishing of "Purcell's Inch Stream" entirely to himself during the Summer season, when night fishing best rewards the angler, and the largest trout take the fly most eagerly.

END OF THE MAYOR OF WIND-GAP.

CANVASSING.

INTRODUCTION

TO

"CANVASSING."

I AM not able to give a reason why the following tale was published with the "Mayor of Wind-gap," and as one of the "O'Hara Tales." It has so happened that I never decidedly put the question to my brother. I could learn it was brought forward in connection with a name that had obtained a degree of celebrity, with the view of doing service to a young lady, on terms of close intimacy with my brother and his family. "Canvassing" was originally written by Miss Martin, daughter to the "Martin of Ballynahinch Castle," and the owner, at one period of his life, of nearly the entire district known as Connemara—fully fifty miles in extent. She was then staying with my brother and his wife in France. The tale was prepared for the press by my brother. Mr. Duffy wishes to give it to the public as a portion of the present edition, and as I think the tale a very good one, I can see no reason why it should be excluded.

MICHAEL BANIM.

INTRODUCTION

CANVASSING.

CHAPTER I.

LORD GLENVILLE and Lord Warringdon were lounging together over a fashionably late breakfast.

"Recollect, Warringdon, you are to be with Cropper and Baines by four this morning, to hear about that girl."

"Time enough," replied Lord Warringdon, carelessly.

"You'll let her slip through your fingers, as you are going on, I see that very plainly."

"Probably," rejoined the son. "Luckily, she is not the only heiress to be found in the city. Besides, to confess the truth, I am in no hurry to run my neck into the noose, if I can help it."

"*If*" replied the father, significantly.

"I think that the heir to a hundred thousand a year, well paid, and but slightly encumbered, *might* help it," retorted the son.

"*I* think," observed the father, "that five thousand a year is a tolerably fair allowance for presents to opera people, and *douceurs* to ladies' maids."

"Not when ninety-five thousand is not found too much for the same purpose," retorted the son, with a sneer.

"Oh! as for that, Warringdon," replied Lord Glenville, affecting not to hear the foregoing remark; "you cannot have money in every way. You quite forget that your two last contested elections cost me fifty thousand pounds, besides having had to pay back all the money you won on that cursed Twickenham party. And then, the rascally newspapers. Recollect all it cost me to make them hold their tongues. I assure you, I had to pave your way out of that business with bank-bills. I often told you that one should never undertake a thing of the kind, unless one had nerve to go through with it. Better never win, unless you make up your mind to fight the man, if he

objects to the fairness of the transaction. Don't you see, Warringdon?"

"For Heaven's sake, spare me that irksome subject; we have already gone over the ground so often, that I know by heart, all you would say. I have before assured you, that I shall never attempt recruiting my finances again in that way. With respect to the obligation you would fix on me, for arranging the affair, you must pardon my not seeing the business in the same light. Had you honoured my drafts, I should not have been driven to such extremities." So saying, his Lordship pushed his cup from him, and threw back his handsome head with an air of languid haughtiness.

His father glanced at him a moment, without speaking, and then, smiling coldly, observed, "*Raison de plus*, my good fellow, for looking after the heiress."

Their tête à tête was interrupted by the entrance of a footman with the morning papers, and a packet of notes and letters. A silence of some minutes ensued, which was broken by Lord Glenville.

"Who is that letter from, Warringdon?"

"Which; this?" answered his son; pointing to one he had just carelessly thrown aside, of which the delicate hue, exquisite odour, and lightly-traced and undefined characters, breathed womanly grace and frivolity. "Oh! aye. From the prettiest woman in London. I am not going to make you my confessor, though."

"No," said Lord Glenville; "the other letter."

"That? Oh, that's from the next prettiest woman in London. I *did* think her *the* prettiest *dans le bon vieux temps*, a fortnight ago."

No, no;" said his father, impatiently; "the letter you have there in your hand."

"Here it is for you," answered Lord Warringdon, tossing it towards his father. "I have not read it myself, yet; but it will keep cool, I dare say."

"Ah, very good;" observed Lord Glenville, as he cast his eye over the epistle; "I wonder you did not tell me of this before, my dear Warringdon."

"How the deuce could I, when I had not read it? What's it all about?"

"It is from Wilmot."

"Who the devil is he?" enquired Lord Warringdon.

"Wilmot! Why, don't you recollect, you wrote to canvass him,

the other day? Wilmot, of Castle Wilmot, in the half-unreclaimed Irish county of ————; the husband of Lady Anne, Lord Rochford's daughter;—you recollect, don't you?"

"Oh, aye. I remember now; what does he say?"

"I may as well read it for you," answered the father.

"No, tell it me: I hate the reading, or hearing read, a stupid letter of business," replied the son.

"He says that he will be most happy to give you his interest; he has I do not know how many thousand votes at your disposal; and is very glad that you look to a county in which your family have so large a stake, and so forth; and concludes by begging you to make his house your head-quarters. Very civil, is it not?"

"Yes," replied his son, yawning; "very great bore, though, to have to go there,—drink whiskey-punch, and have my ears torn to pieces by their infernal brogue."

"Very true," assented Lord Glenville. "You cannot, however, have the people's votes without taking a little trouble about them."

"If you would let me sit for one of your boroughs, I should be spared all this annoyance. Do you know, I have half a mind to pitch Wilmot, of Castle-Wilmot, and his cursed county, to the devil?"

"Do so, if you like, my good fellow. But how long do you expect to be out of the King's Bench after you have performed that feat? As for the boroughs, I have already told you, that I have sold them, for this time. I wanted money—so there's an end of them till next parliament. You will walk over the course, in —— Wilmot says;—what more do you want than to *be* in parliament? But it is your affair, not mine. I wish, my dear Warringdon, you would condescend to listen to me, and play with your brute some other time."

Lord Warringdon had been, in fact, amusing himself watching his superb St. Bernard's dog, tearing one of the billets, received that morning, into as many pieces as his noble master had torn the feelings of its fair writer. "Ha, Monk, you rascal, you have been worrying the wrong letter. What a bore! I did not half read it, so I don't know now, whether it is to-day, or to-morrow, that he takes himself off to his fair Terpsichore; leaving his *bella Tradita* to be cheered by his *fido Amico*. Capital, is it not, Monk, my boy? But if I should go the wrong day, what the devil, then? Why, it will be your fault, not mine; and that's some comfort, as times go. Jesting apart, however, it is a nuisance. I thought

the fellow was tearing only my love's letter, and it turns out to be my *last* love's. A great bore, is it not?" asked this son of the nineteenth century, of his father.

"Warringdon, the subject upon which I am speaking to you is really a very serious one. My advice, if you would please to attend to it, might be of some importance to you."

The modern father did not think that a love affair with a married woman was an event requiring his paternal interference. "But I cannot talk with you while you look so listless," he added; "do sit down, I beg of you, and favour me with a few moments' attention."

Lord Warringdon threw himself into a Bergère, and his father proceeded.—"A canvass among these hot-headed Irish needs some care, I assure you. You must lay aside your apathy, your exclusiveness, your indifference, whether you offend or not, and for once in your life you must try to please."

"Must I?"—exclaimed his son, stretching out his finely-turned leg, and examining it with complacency.

The father did not notice the interruption and continued.—"Wilmot has the first interest in his county, and has represented it before now; but he is at present under embarrassments, I hear. A sad fellow, for getting through money, as all his compatriots are;—ove head and ears in debt, and obliged to play hide-and-seek occasionall with his creditors. But in Ireland, that's nothing, you know. The his wife—."

"Have mercy on me," interrupted Lord Warringdon. "Are you going to give me the man's pedigree and private history, as if I wanted to write his life."

"She has the name of being a great match-maker," continued Lord Glenville; "and when she was here some years ago, was very busy *in*"—

"What the deuce is all that to me?" asked Lord Warringdon.

"It is a great deal to you;—she has daughters."

"She might have a hundred, for any thing I care;" observed the young Viscount, again yawning.

"One of them is very handsome," continued Lord Glenville, "and clever. Now I would caution you."

"Against falling in love with her, is it?" interrupted the son, with a languid laugh. "No fear of that, I promise you—I hate clever women, you know, and make it a rule never to fall in love with any beauties but married ones."

"I know. But take care, on the other hand, how you assume

a prickly air, towards them; for that would not do either—you must admire the daughters' charms, or you will lose the father's votes."

"Never fear. Once in for the thing, I will go through with it properly—I will be dazzled with their brilliancy; captivated with their accomplishments;—and driven mad by their beauty.—Oh, these cursed accomplished beauties!—the brogue, and bad roads, are nothing in comparison. French, Italian, and music, conchology, phrenology, and mineralogy;—with a dash of algebra, and animal magnetism, concluding with an interlude of astronomy and mathematics. There's a bill of fare, enough to strike terror into any heart but that of an Electioneerer." So saying, he arose, called his dog, hummed a Mazurka, and sauntered out of the room.

A few days afterwards he was in his travelling chariot, rolling off to Hollyhead. We cannot better employ our time while he is on the road than by giving some idea of the family who are about to be honoured by his presence.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Wilmot, of Castle Wilmot, was what is termed, in Ireland, a capital fellow;—good-natured, reckless, and extravagant. The owner of an estate, like most old Irish ones, a little the worse for the wear, and living, like most such proprietors, as if the said estate was spick and span new. In a word, just the man to be loved and robbed by an Irish tenantry and household. He had been residing abroad for some years, and had just returned home to "retrench," as he says, now that he is first introduced to the reader. But, alas! the claret, champagne, and Burgundy, continue to be poured forth as liberally as if he were still in the land of vines. There was a second table in his establishment, as expensive as the first; nay, a third, and a fourth, which, though less delicate in the quality of their aliments, made up the difference in the quantity consumed. An ox a week, and three sheep a day, was the minimum of provision disposed of in the kitchen and servants' hall; all other things were on the same "grandee" scale of expenditure. His house was always thronged with guests; high and low, rich and poor; all had a "*cead mille faltha*" at Castle

Wilmot. The consequences of such a system may be easily guessed. Lady Anne, unable to stop her husband's wild profusion, at last contented herself with turning it to some purpose, and as *he* would have his house filled with company, she took care there should be a fair proportion of marrying men, at a certain ratio of fortune. By this means, she had already got three daughters off her hands; and she blessed her stars, and so did all who knew her, that she had but two remaining; for Lady Anne's reputation as a match-maker, had rendered her the terror of mothers who had sons, and the envy of those who had daughters.

No expense had been spared on the education of the Miss Wilmots. Mr. Wilmot's residence, whether in London or on the Continent, had, from their infancy, been besieged by Masters and by Mistresses; by teachers of music and teachers of languages. They had learned to dance from Coulon; to sing from Liverati; they spoke French like the *habitués* of the Faubourg St. Germain; their Italian was "*la lingua roseana in bocca Romana.*" Maria, the eldest of the two remaining girls, being plain, was more especially exhorted by her mother to study "the accomplishments." And Maria had sense enough to follow the advice. She did study "the accomplishments" most assiduously, and successfully. But though she spoke all manner of tongues, and played all sorts of instruments; though she dressed like a French woman; and flirted—like any woman,—some way or other, all these perfections had hitherto been exerted in vain; Maria was still unmarried. The men agreed that she sang and played like an angel; but that she looked like—what it would not be very civil to repeat; but, which, however, some very particular friend of Maria's *did* repeat. Whereupon Lady Anne marked the delinquent in her black book, and vowed that she would make him repent before he died—that is to say, marry. Lady Anne, indeed, was the more indignant at the observation, because she felt there was some truth in it. Having, through her own family, an excellent introduction for her daughters, into the best English set, she had once hoped that Maria, although plain, might, perhaps, have been fashionable; but there, again, she was baffled. Maria, though she had two essential requisites for fashion, that is to say, intrepidity and hardiness, was considered by her *exclusive* acquaintance, as much too vivacious, ever to become perfectly high bred. Unfortunately for her, she possessed much of the humour of her country; and had, more than once, not only actually laughed herself, but had caused others to perpetrate a similar enormity. She was, in consequence, set down

as "sadly Irish," in other words, extreme *mauvais ton;* if not positively vulgar, something closely approximating to it. Maria, it appears, was not aware that although an Englishman, of a certain *caste*, may perchance be induced to enjoy a jest, he never fails to pretend to undervalue the jester, whether the said jester be an amateur, or a buffoon by profession; that, conscious how much trouble a witty saying would cost himself, he imagines the gaiety of his lively neighbours to be as great an effort to them as to him; and that, therefore, when they laugh, or are brilliant, in his presence, all *that* is done by self-admitted inferiors, to please a superior. So poor Maria was accused of being very Irish.

"Next to saying I picked a bone," said she to her mother, as they chatted over a criticism reported to have been made upon her, the evening before, "or, that I eat with my knife, they could not, according to their code of manners, say a worse thing of me; stupid, prosing set! I shall let them see, if we come to the push, that they will have the worst of it. They don't yet know a tithe of what is in me; they imagine, because I do not talk as if I were half asleep, that it is because I cannot talk. To-morrow evening, at my uncle's, I will look, and move, and speak, so like the Lady Vapids, that not one in the room but will confess I could be as 'nice a person,' and as tiresome as the best among them."

The powers of mimicry which Maria had hitherto restrained, she fully displayed at her uncle's, on the night of which she had spoken—allowing her fastidious censors to see what was in store for them, if they did not leave her and her Irishism unmolested.

"So, you imagine," said she to one of her critics, "that we laugh to divert you; and that, therefore, you must be gods to us? You are mistaken, my good lord, we do not laugh to amuse you, but to amuse ourselves; we laugh because we like it; because we can't help it, in fact. What would the philosopher of old, who defined man to be a laughing animal, say to you English?—you high English, I mean? Why he would say you were '*sadly* English.' I have philosophy, you see, as well as nature, on my side; so pray *do* let me laugh, and allow yourselves to laugh along with me."

Maria, thanks to her courage, kept her ground, among her fashionable associates; and became, at last, not so much vulgar, as odd. But Maria knew that men of fashion have as great an objection to odd girls, as to vulgar ones. "I see, plainly," said she, "that I shall never be able to marry among them: but some fool or other, with money, who is out of the set, will think it a fine thing to take me, because I am in it. That is all I can expect, after

all my *battling* for a place among them. Isabel, you have a better chance than I have, you are so much more quiet."

Maria was right. Her sister Isabel possessed a natural timidity which made her more fitted for the impress for English mannerism. Though not called beautiful, few could see her without feeling her to be so. Her acquirements did not bear quite so professional a stamp as those of her sister, but there was more taste evinced in the manifestation of them. Her conversation was quiet, but interesting—animated, without being positively gay; graceful, and slightly dashed with romance. Indeed, she was altogether better suited than her sister to have succeeded among the "high English." But then, Isabel Wilmot had no money; and beauty, and elegance, and accomplishments are such drugs in London! Besides, she had some strange and peculiar ways of thinking, which checked her success in life. She never could be induced to imitate her sister's "Bold strokes for a Husband;" and would even venture to remonstrate with her on such open love-making to the men.

"My dear, do not talk nonsense," her mother would say; "your sister must do as others do—as all your acquaintances either have done, are doing, or will do. Men will not make love now-a-days; they must, therefore, be made love to. One of your curls is out of place, my love."

And here Maria would chime in—"You are so ridiculous, Isabel—wanting to play the violet, forsooth; modest and retired, waiting to be sought for; prettily indifferent whether a hand come to cull you or not. This might have been very right a century ago, my good child;—when the men would woo, it was perhaps right that women should wait to be wooed. But "*autres temps, autres mœurs, ma belle.*" You violet young ladies may now remain till you wither, before any one comes to pluck you. The men of the present day expect *us* to court *them*."

"Truly! a fitting expectation," Isabel would rejoin: "so while they repose in their dignity, like the Eastern gentleman on his couch, we are to play the part of Bayaderes, and after we have danced and sung like Terpsichores and Syrens; after we have exhausted all our little wiles and graces, to charm their apathy, we are to think ourselves repaid, if we win a smile in return from their high mightinesses. That I will never do—never"—she would add, earnestly.

"Don't be so emphatic about nothing at all, my dear, 'tis extreme '*mauvais ton*,'" her mother would answer. "You need not marry at all, you know, if you don't choose it. All I wish to

observe is, that if you *do* intend marrying, and marrying in a certain rank, you must not expect the men to look after *you*."

Now, Lady Anne had brought up her daughters to consider a single life as any thing rather than a life of "blessedness." Yet though Isabel shivered at the thought of being an old maid, she also shrank at the idea of *running after the men*, though daily exhorted to it, by her dear mamma's precept, and her sister's example. She was too worldly-minded to be perfectly high-minded; and too high-minded to be perfectly worldly. So she halted between two sets of feelings and opinions;—a marrying girl—and yet a dignified one. She had both a head and a heart. Yet she aimed to establish herself among "the certain set," who, as it is proverbially said, do not care or pretend to either. She felt chilled by their coldness, saddened by their hollowness, wearied by their apathy; but then, rank, fashion, fortune, floated as a bright vision before her eyes; and, like many other girls, she thought it possible, some day or other, to reconcile her ambition with her affections. In fact, she was incapable of sacrificing her feelings to her interests; but she determined never to indulge the one at the expense of the other. While in this state of vacillation, her father was obliged, in consequence of having been robbed by his local agents, to return with his family from London to Ireland, where they had been remaining now nearly two years in a solitude (comparatively speaking), very little to the taste of either of the sisters. Isabel would not listen to the soft speeches of any of her country neighbours, or haply she might have heard "something to her advantage." Amongst others, a certain Mr. McAlpine was deeply smitten with her;—of him more anon. But though the gentlemen thought her very handsome, they also thought she gave herself rather too many airs; as for the ladies, they, of course, abominated her. For it is allowed to a woman, by women, to be either pretty or clever; but, to be both together is unpardonable. They, therefore, liked Maria better than Isabel, because the men did not.

Still, "though devilish ugly," according to the phraseology of her Irish male friends, Maria Wilmot was a "devilish" pleasant, off-hand girl. No London airs, like the beauty; no stuff and nonsense about her, but the truth of a good-humoured, rattling girl, "who said every thing that came uppermost."

Dear gentlemen! you were never more mistaken in your lives. Maria Wilmot, with all her apparent *abandon*, never said any thing for which she had not a motive. You imagined that one who

incessantly talked and laughed could "have had no harm in her"—that is to say, no design upon you. All the ill-natured things she said of her fellow-women, and all the forward ones she said to yourselves, were, therefore, set down by you to mere spirits and giddiness.

Maria, in truth, scarce ever lost presence of mind. She was cased in armour of brass, nothing touched or disconcerted her; and surely, if possession be eleven points in the law of the land, impudence is eleven points in the game of life; indeed, it is a gift as valuable as talent in man, or as beauty in woman, for it makes its possessor independent of either. We have enlarged somewhat on this point of Maria's idiosyncracy, inasmuch as without perfect knowledge of her distinguishing characteristic, the reader might be unable fully to comprehend her future proceedings.

CHAPTER III.

On or about the day that Lord Warringdon left London on his way to Wilmot Castle, Lady Anne and her daughters were sitting in the breakfast-room of the afore-named edifice, reading, and occasionally amusing themselves by watching the rain, which poured in torrents outside the windows and even penetrated a little on their inside. Wilmot Castle, originally a shooting-lodge, had only recently become (for certain cogent reasons which we do not choose to mention, but which the sheriff of its county town could guess at), the family residence. Towers of various heights and forms, and of different orders of architecture, classic, gothic, and oriental, according to the suggestion of each successive adviser of the family, were heaped together with the coolest disregard of the suitable, the convenient, or even of the comfortable.

"What a day!" exclaimed Maria, yawning—"I wonder will my papa bring in any people from the assizes?"

"I'm sure" observed Isabel, "it is as well to be without any, as to have such creatures as he is likely to bring."

"My dear, I make it a rule," returned Maria, "to be satisfied, wherever I am, with the best the country produces, whether as regards eatables, wearables, or *flirtables*. You can't gather 'grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles:' and because I can't get pine-apples,

I will not sit down and starve, if there are plenty even of good potatoes within my reach."

"That's what I call sound philosophy, Maria."

"Excellent! for its sound sense," agreed Lady Anne, looking off her book for a moment, to commend her elder daughter's rationality.

"I assure you, Isabel," continued Maria "if it were only to keep your hand *in*, you would do well to flirt a little now and then, with whatever God sends. 'Why don't you take pattern by Miss Maria?' as old nurse says 'you see what elegant divarsion she makes for herself, not all as one as Miss Isabel.'"

"That's all very well for nurse to say, but—"

"But," interrupted Maria, laughing, "not very well for me to do; is that it, sentimental Isabel? For my part, I think flirting not only an agreeable, but a very salutary, pastime. A good flirting bout adds at least, ten years to *my* life. I remember when you were a pretty good hand at it yourself, Isabel."

"So do I, too," replied Isabel smiling, "but not with such men as you are talking about—I could not flirt with a man I did not like."

"I could. Aye, and not only flirt with him, but—marry him."

"Well!" replied Isabel, "I can much better understand a woman's marrying a man she dislikes, than flirting with one she dislikes."

"Upon what principle?" asked Maria.

"Upon the principle that a man might with great calmness suffer a rope to be placed round his neck, although he will hardly laugh, and jest, and bandy witty sayings with the hangman."

"Bravo, bravo!" exclaimed Maria, laughing, "a husband compared to a hangman! *c'est unique, ma chére.* But there's Paudeen, I vow! and I dare say he brings a letter from my father."

She started off to the hall-door to watch Paudeen, puffing and blowing, as he ascended the hill leading to the Castle. Little Paudeen was one of the *corps de reserve* composed of errand boys, and idling boys, who seemed just born into the world for no other purpose than to supply, by their little bare legs, the occasional lapses of memory of the Castle Wilmot household.

"Murdher! we forgot to send for the salt! The beef will be spoilt intirely, for want of the salt! Where in the world is Paudeen? Till I'd make him step across the mountain for the salt."

But Paudeen would have been despatched the night before "for the tay, that was forgot to be sint for, the same time as the sugar." And one of Paudeen's compeers would be packed off for the salt.

Paudeen was now returning, after performing some confidential mission of this nature, from the assize town.

"How are you, Paudeen?" said Maria.

"Finely, I thank your honour, Miss;" replied Paudeen, pulling out a lock of his hair, in his eagerness to make his best bow. He would have pulled off his hat if he had had one.

"Well, Paudeen, did you see the master?"—

"I did, plaze your honour:" replied the hatless, shoeless page of Castle Wilmot.

"And when is he coming?" continued Maria.

"The day after to-morrow, he will be here, Miss:" rejoined Paudeen.

"And do you know what prevented his coming yesterday?"

"Waiting for the gintleman, I b'lieve, Miss."

"What gentleman?" asked Maria, briskly.

"The gintleman from England, Miss."

"What has a gentleman from England to do with the master's coming home, Paudeen?"

"Sure it has every thing to do with it, wherein the gintleman is coming along with himself—came all the ways from England, a purpose to ax the masther's lave to be made a mimber of, Miss."

"Can it be Lord Warringdon, I wonder?" said Maria, thinking aloud.

"That's the name, Miss—you have it, and you got the Masther's letter, didn't you, Miss, where he tould you all about it?"

"No," answered Maria, "we got no letter."

"Faith and he sent it, Miss, for all that, by a brother of Pat Murphy's; but 'tis my opinion, Miss, he got drunk and lost the letter; 'case you know, Miss, he loves a dhrop. So, Miss, you didn't get the bad places on the road mended, nor any thing ready, Miss? To be sure what a villain he is! the masther will be mad, and no blame to him!"

Maria returned hastily to the apartment where she had left her mother and sister. "Good people," said she, "I am the bearer of important tidings—our solitude is about to be broken in upon by no less a personage than Viscount Warringdon."

"Nonsense, Maria!" exclaimed her sister.

"Truth, Isabel."

"Who says so?" demanded Lady Anne.

"I have it on indisputable authority—that of Paudeen, who has just returned from the scene of action—where he left my father awaiting the noble Viscount's arrival."

"Very extraordinary that your father should not have mentioned this sooner!" replied Lady Anne.

"It appears that he has, in a letter, but that the letter has been lost."

"I am afraid there is not a single thing in the house fit for the reception of such a person as Lord Warringdon—do ring the bell, I must only do the best I can."

Pat Murphy answered the summons, and a few minutes afterwards his voice was heard in the servants' hall, calling out in a hasty manner, "send up Jim Flanagan to my lady."

"What for?" asked Mrs. M'Donogh.

"Never you mind;" was the surly rejoinder.

"Never you mind, to me! you baste! How dare you say never mind, to me?"

"I say it again, then," rejoined Pat, "and I'd say it to the King of England, or the Pope, if he was in it, or the masther himself, when such conthrary things happen."

"Oh, then, I'll tell you one thing, my man; and mind what I say. Don't be shewing your ill manners to your masther's nurse, whomsoever you may be impident to, for that would be a worse day for you than ever your worst inemy wished to you."

Pat seemed to suspect as much, for he made no answer to this denunciation, but turned round on the crowd who stood gaping and listening to the dialogue.

"Why the divil don't you send up Jim when I bid you?"

"And how the divil could we, when he isn't in it?"

"Thunder and ages! then, where is he?"

"Gone home, to be sure; where else would he be?"

"The curse o' Cromwell on him!" piously exclaimed Pat. "I never knew him betther than to be always *in* the way, or always *out* of it—Meehelleen, where are *you?*"

"Here!" exclaimed a little sharp voice.

"Meehelleen, *Ma vourneen*, you must go by the first light in the morning for Jim, and bid him come here if he's alive, by eight o'clock, afore breakfast! Or, wait! may be 'tis as well at once to tell him what he is wanting for; 'twill save time. So bid him take a couple o' score of min to the road, to mend the bad places—do you mind?"

"I do:" replied Meehelleen, half asleep.

"Bad luck to them scoundrels on the grand jury, that's always traversing the masther's presintments," charitably observed one of he *attachés* of the kitchen.

"You are a fool for that wish," responded Pat—"may be if the roads were betther we'd have some company thravelling on them that mightn't be so convanient."

"A then, Pat," said a rosy-faced laundry maid, suspected of possessing more influence over Pat's surly humour than he cared to acknowledge—"A then, tell us, an' God bless you, who's expicted?"

"The devil and his mother!" was the lover-like answer.

"The Lord save us! don't bite our heads off, any how. The cat may look at the king—any one may ax a question, I hope."

"Well then, indeed, Peggy," remarked Mrs. M'Donogh—"I think you might as well wait till your betthers were sarved, before you put your spoon in the dish; more especially when the discoorse is of family concarns. And when *I can't* get an answer, 'tis not the likes of you that will. But, indeed, I desarve no betther, when I demane myself to join such company."

In hopes, however, that Pat would, sooner or later, make the *amende honorable*, and communicate the desired information, Mrs. M'Donogh retained her seat, and suspended her dignity for a season.

Indeed, like many other people of importance, she found grandeur a troublesome every-day appendage, and was not sorry to exchange, sometimes, the stiffness of housekeeper-room etiquette for the more sociable conversation of the servants' hall.

A few moments' reflection had convinced Pat of the impropriety of answering so important a personage as Mrs. M'Donogh with the disrespect of which he had been guilty; and, after two or three muttered curses on the absent Jim Flanagan, he re-addressed the good lady thus.

"Well, ma'am; if I said anything out of the way, I ax your pardon: you know, yourself, I wouldn't be the one to displase the masther's dog, let alone his nurse. Sure, if I didn't love him, and all belonging to him, as I do, and if I wouldn't go to the hottest place in the other world for them, I needn't mind who comes or who laves the house. There's Tom Sassenach, for you, who's always as mild as a girl the day of her wedding. He takes the world aisy. The masther saved him from being thransported, in London, and, for all that, he wouldn't help us to bate the process-server, becase, indeed, he might take the law of him, for an assault upon the king's highway. God help his poor bothered English head, ''tisn't on the king's highway, at all, man,' says I, for 'twas up a' *Boreen* we caught the fellow, Mrs. M'Donogh, but the devil a one of Tom would lift a stick. I'm not all's one as that mane-spirited cratur. I'd lose the last dhrop of my blood for

the masther; and, you know, ma'am, that many's the time I have done what one sthroke more would have made murder of, to keep off them blood-thirsty Orangemen of process-servers."

Pat's audience, much as they desired this exordium shortened, did not venture on imitating the means resorted to by impatient members of the Lower House, when they wish to curtail long-winded *exposés*. Pat was neither *questioned* nor *coughed down*, but suffered to say his say. The Irish are naturally a courteous people. When it was evident he had finished, and not till then, a buzz of approbation, and of approbation only, met his ear. "True, for you, Pat, there never lived a better sarvant to a good masther, than yourself,—divil a better."

Now, in the Irish vocabulary, a good servant does not always mean the same as in the English one. In fact, a good servant, on the other side of the water, sometimes signifies an individual who may be troublesome, drunken, or negligent, even disrespectful, but who would stand up for his master's dignity, and defend his person at the peril of his own neck; very useful qualifications, it may be added, in a country, where, now and then, its gentry owe their personal liberty to their inaccessible roads and a devoted tenantry.

"At the same time," continued Pat, "that I would lay down my life for the masther, and why wouldn't I? He saved my father, in the rebellion, from dying, as none of his name ever did before him, or will afther him, if it wouldn't be myself, that might give one of the lads, with papers, a taste more of the stick than he could convaniently carry. But for all that, and well as I love him, by the powers! he sometimes makes me mad with him. Nothing must do him, but to write to ax that lord from England, that's coming to canvass the county."

Many and various were the exclamations that now rose in every variety of Irish intonation, from servants' hall and kitchen.

"Blessed Virgin, purtect us!" exclaimed Mrs. M'Donough "sure it's joking you are, Pat? a gintleman from England!"

"Bad cess to them villains of turkeys," cried the cook; "there isn't one of them fit to kill! I have been breaking my heart, this fortnight past, sthriving to fatten 'em, and can't, God help me!"

"Devil a thing to ate or dhrink in the house, this blessed night!" groaned the groom. "I never knew the aquel of the masther, for doin' things hand over head, without so much as telling one before he does 'em."

"That he may brake his neck, I pray God, for all the throuble

he is giving us," piously aspirated the housemaid, meaning the expected stranger, however, not her master.

"What matter, whether he does or not?" interrupted the coachman; "one would think, to hear ye all going on, there never was seen a jintleman in the house afore. What's good enough for the quality of the counthry is good enough for him, I suppose."

"Don't bother us," said Pat; "We know that as well as you can tell us. 'Tisn't that he's better than other quality, but that he's more impudent. Them English is so d——d concated, passing their remarks on Ireland, and making their skit of all they seen, when they go back again."

"Is he young or ould, Pat," enquired the laundry-maid, making a second attempt to extract information from her uncommunicative admirer.

"What the devil does it signify, whether he is, or no?"

"'Tis you that's in the sweet timper to night, sure enough," retorted his mistress. "It does, then, signify every thing, whether a gintleman coming to the house is young or ould. If he's a young, rich gintleman, who knows what good may be in store for one of the young ladies?"

"Oh, then, if he's any good at all, down on my binded knees this night, I pray the saints in heaven, one of the young ladies may get him. How proud I'd be, if he was to purpose for Miss Maria! she's such a darling, hearty, pleasant cratur. I wonder which of 'em it will be?"

"You may spare yourself the throuble of wondhering about it, for he'll take neither of 'em, I can tell you," said Pat. "That's the way with them English always; they'll ate you out of house and home, and then walk off with themselves, fair and aisy. But it's Miss Isabel he'd take, if he took either. She's such a darling, purty young lady."

Here a violent ringing of the parlour bell interrupted the colloquy.

"Hubbaboo!" exclaimed Pat; "I forgot, intirely, to tell ye, my lady wants Winny directly;—skelp off this minute, like a lamplighter."

Winny was not very slow in obeying the summons, in hopes of learning all the particulars concerning the alarming visit.

"Winny, my good girl," said Lady Anne, "you must get the best room ready against the day after to-morrow, for a gentleman the master has asked here."

"Ah, then, my Lady, sure it isn't here he'll sleep."

"Why, Winny, where can he sleep but here?"

"Faicks, my Lady, there's no sheets to put on the bed."

"No sheets! how do you mean?"

"The masther, my Lady, that ordered widow Fahy's cow into the shrubbery, beyant, and myself didn't know the conthrariness of her, becase, my Lady, she's only a short time in the place,—widow Fahy bought her of a man in the lower parish, so I left themselves and herself together, my lady."

"You left what together?" said Lady Anne. "I don't understand what you're talking about."

"The sheets and the cow, my Lady."

"Oh, very well, go on," said Lady Anne.

"Well, my Lady, I wint to my dinner, not thinking any harum would happen my sheets, or I would have made my little sister stop with them. And when I come back, to look to see were they dhry, sorrow of a tatther of a sheet did I see, but a rag sticking out of her mouth."

"Out of your sister's mouth?" asked Lady Anne, who, not having been Irish bred and born, was seldom able to follow the entanglements of an Irish sentence.

"Not at all, my Lady; my little sisther wasn't in it, more is the pity. No! but sticking out of the cow's mouth it was. My Lady, the sight left my eyes when I seen it, and a wakeness came over me at the start I got."

"The upshot of it is," said Maria, "the cow has eaten the sheets; isn't that it, Winny?"

"It is, Miss: but, sure it isn't the sheets, itself, that's the worst of it. We could borry a pair of sheets from Mrs. Molony, who's always a good warrant to lend, only for the curtains being spoilt, too."

"What! did the cow eat the curtains, too?"

"No, my Lady, but Father John's brother!"

"Eat *them?*" exclaimed Lady Anne.

"No, my Lady, tore 'em."

"How could he tear them?"

"Father John's brother, my Lady, that was at a wedding, Saturday was a week, and he come here becase 'twas late for himself and his baste to be crossing the bogs."

"What has this to do with the curtains being torn?" interrupted Lady Anne.

"Sure, my Lady, it has every thing to do with it, seeing he was pleasant at the same time."

"What does she mean to say?" asked Lady Anne, turning to

Maria, who was enjoying the dialogue between the Irish servant and English mistress, and thought it much too pretty a one to be inclined to spoil it by a little explanation.

"I wish, Maria, you would not stand laughing there, but help me to understand this girl. "What on earth a man's being pleasant can have to do with tearing curtains, I can't imagine."

"But sure, I mane he was not himself, you know."

Lady Anne still looked puzzled.

"He tuk a sup, I mane; you understand, don't you, Miss?" continued Winny, curtsying to Maria.

"To be sure I do, Winny; do you think I was born in Ireland for nothing?"

Maria was particularly anxious to stand well with the lower order, and have their good word. Besides, she was, indeed, constitutionally good humoured, and never ill-natured, except when it was her interest to be so.

"Ah," thought Winny, "Miss Maria has more sinse in her little finger, than my lady in her whole carcass. Well, Miss, to make a long story short, right or wrong, he wanted more liquor, and troth we were afeard to give him any more. He axed the masther then, himself, and when the masther wouldn't give it to him either, he went mad intirely. Then the masther came down to see who it was was making sich a noise in the house, and when he seen who it was, he bid Pat Murphy and Paudeen carry him up to bed, and when he wasn't plazed with the reception he got, sure he tore the curtains in ribbons, and broke the bed, and destroyed the room intirely, Miss. I never seen him so pleasant, as he was that same night."

"Yes, but, Winny, that has nothing to do with the best room, you know:" observed Maria.

"Avoch, Miss, sure it's of the best room I am talking. Sure it's the best room he ruint this ways. Sorrow may care what capers he cut any where else but there, sure that's what's killing me, Miss;" continued Winny, dolefully.

"And pray," interrupted Lady Anne, in displeasure, "what possessed you to put a drunken man into the best room?"

"God sees and knows, it wasn't my fault, my Lady, but the masther's that tould me take care, for my life, would I put him where your honour's Ladyship could hear him bawling, and roaring, and going on, for fear you wouldn't be plazed with the noise he was making, my Lady; and I had no place to put him in out of the way, but the best room. Myself, and Paudeen, and Pat Murphy, and all the other girls in the house, my Lady, were striving an hour

and more by the clock, to get up him the garret stairs, but it failed us. He kept kicking, and prancing, and biting like mad—sich other going on, I never seen, for all I'm used to men in liquor. So I went to tell the masther it failed us to get up him the garret stair—an' the masther, he bid me put him in the best room. 'Faith, sir,' says I, 'I'm afeard my lady will be mad.' 'No she won't,' said he, 'do as I bid you.' Troth, my lady, I'd be very sorry to do it at any other bidding but his own."

Just at this moment a doleful exclamation from the group that had gathered round the half-opened door, attracted Maria's attention.

"Arrah, Pat dear! How will this be at all? My Lady will go mad intirely, and no blame to her, in regard of the spoons."

"What spoons?" asked Maria.

"The spoons of the house, Miss, that Barney Sullivan took the loan of, without lave."

"Stole, I suppose you mean," observed Maria.

"Troth, and I b'live that's only another way of saying the same thing. He borry'd them as though for his sisther's wedding—you know the one that married a son of Mark Flanagan's, a sort of half-gentleman, that must be made much of, so the masther bid me give 'em them, and when I tould the masther I could not get them of him again, if I didn't bate him, he told me not, and that he would see about him himself; but he went to the 'sizes sure, and he forgot 'em."

"And why did you not tell me, Pat, that the things in your charge were missing?"

"A sure, my Lady, didn't the masther threaten he'd banish me the place, if I let on to your Ladyship about it? Faith, I'd be very sorry to be decaving you, my Lady, in regard of a blackguard of his kind. Barney Sullivan is no such great frind of mine, as that I'd be telling lies to screen him from his desarvings."

"Was ever any thing like this!" exclaimed Isabel, for the first time taking a part in the conversation—She had hitherto sat silent and provoked.

"Yes," answered Maria, "there have been fifty things just like it—one would imagine you were still in Grovesnor Square, where there are no cows to eat sheets, nor Barney Sullivans to steal spoons."

"We shall be disgraced, I see clearly:" said Lady Anne, in a desponding tone. "Even with the best appointed establishment, we should hardly escape the criticism of a young English gentleman of fashion: but such a castle Rack-Rent as this, would make us the ridicule of any one—and he is to be here the day after to-morrow! I really do not know which way to turn."

"We had better give out we have got the typhus fever in the house, and that we must relinquish the pleasure of his company;" said Maria. "But come, mamma, let you and Isabel take yourselves off, and I will overlook the domestic economy and settle it all capitally, you shall see."

After the door had closed on them, Maria began a review of the cellar. "The champagne is gone long ago I know, but there's some Madeira, and—"

"Madeira! Miss Maria, sorrow a dhrop in the place as much as would blind your eye. The last dozen was drank the day before the masther left home:" replied Pat.

"Bad enough;" remarked Maria. "Still we have the Burgundy, you know."

"Ah, then where, Miss?" enquired Pat.

"In the cellar, I suppose."

"Faix and you have not, Miss, Mr. O'Higgerty got the last of it, when he gave the grand dinner to the army, last week."

"Hermitage, Frontignac, Hock, Vin de Grave, are none of them forthcoming?"

"No!"

"What does remain then?"

"Faith, Miss, it won't take long to say that—only a dozen of port, and half-a-dozen of sherry!" Such was the comfortable announcement of the state of the cellar.

"And what's to be done about the dinner, Miss?" enquired the terrified cook. Me, that has neither duck, nor chicken, nor turkey fit to kill. I never seen such schamers of poulthry! the world wouldn't fatten 'em—just as if they done it a purpose, out of contrariness. May our blessed mother look down upon me this night, in my thruble!"

Maria's courage began to ooze out. However she put a good face on the matter, and after a little consultation and recollection, the affair was arranged more creditably for the Wilmot pride than could at one time have been expected. Borrowing parties were sent out in all directions, to repair the various wants and losses already enumerated, and, by the eventful day, Maria had the satisfaction of seeing that every thing was tolerably right and proper. Lady Anne resumed her bland smiles, and Isabel began to breathe freely once more. In which pleasing state of mind we will leave them, and return to our friend Lord Warringdon, who has just arrived at ———, and early in the morning is preparing to start for Wilmot Castle, accompanied by Mr. Wilmot himself.

CHAPTER IV.

THE road to Wilmot Castle, never very good, was now, owing to the late rains, nearly impassable. Mr. Wilmot, although he had issued strict orders to "little Paudeen" to bid Pat Murphy tell Jim Flanagan to give "a touch of mending" to the bad places, entertained certain misgivings as to the manner in which the said orders would be executed by the said Jim Flanagan; even should the said Paudeen not have forgotten to tell the said Pat Murphy to tell the said Jim.

"I am devilishly afraid, Kelly," he said to his man, as he was stepping into bed, the evening before they were to start, "that Lord Warringdon's London-built carriage will break down on the road to Wilmot Castle."

"Faith, sir, I wouldn't be surprised if it did."

"Had I not better tell him to leave it here, then? Costelloe will take care of it. What do you think, Kelly?"

"Faith sir, if you take my advice, you will say nothing about it, but leave it all to God. May be, it won't break down at all, sir. If it does, we must only pretend to be greatly surprised on account of how bad the road is grown. Or, suppose we lay the blame on the dhriver; that will do betther. Jim is to dhrive us, (he is a tinant of your own, sir, from the other side o' the county;) and he won't mind, a ha'porth, getting the blame instead of your road sir. We can make it up to him some other way, sir. Iit would sound so quare, sir, to be telling a sthrange gentleman, just come to the counthry, that one hasn't a road fit for him to thravel on, sir."

"By Jove, Kelly, I believe you are right," replied the master. "No use in exposing the nakedness of the land, if we can help it. As you say, may be, we shan't break down; and if we do, you can give Jim half a guinea to take the blame on himself, poor devil!"

So Mr. Wilmot did not apprise his noble guest of the more than probable doom of his highly-finished, London-built carriage.

"Where is the post-boy?" asked Lord Warringdon, of a tatter-demalion figure near him.

"Is it the dhriver you are axin' about, sir,—my Lord, I mane?" Asked, instead of answering the person, addressed; and he re-

spectfully took off a hat that had, we suppose, once been good and shaped like other hats, but that now bore evidence of hard service. "Sure, I'm the boy you want, my Lord."

His Lordship showed some surprise at this piece of information; but Jim, though interpreting the surprise to be created by his own un-post-boy like appearance, affected to take it quite the other way.

"Faith! it's mysel,' and nobody else, that's to be your dhriver, my Lord. Did ye think, sir,—my Lord, I mane,—that my master, Misther Costelloe, would put you off wid any one but mysel'? Faith, my Lord, he would be very sorry to do such a thing as that; 'tis me that always dhrives the Lords and Mimbers of Parliament. Misther Costelloe wouldn't let me dhrive any of the commonalty, at all 'good or bad, but keeps me for the grand quality intirely, such as your Lordship's honour, or Mr. Wilmot. Yes, indeed, I'm, his grandee dhriver, my Lord." Jim closed his harangue by giving a chuck to his femoral habiliments and a knowing look at Mike Kelly.

"So, then," said Lord Warringdon, laughing, aye, English and exclusive as he was, actually laughing at the singularly unaristocratic appearance of the "grandee dhriver." "So, then, I am to consider it quite a compliment to have you for a coachman?"

"Oh! not to say intirely a compliment, my Lord," replied Jim, twirling between finger and thumb the before-mentioned hat, and smiling and looking modest.

"Not entirely?" asked Lord Warringdon; "only almost, Jim, is that it?"

"I b'lieve this is the way it is. A grand gintleman like you, my Lord, would not like, may be, to be behoulden to the likes of me, for a compliment. So your honour's Lordship can make me any compliment you plase, when we're parting, by and bye."

"Very well," answered Lord Warringdon, still amused at Jim's way of arranging the punctilio of obligation,—"you pay me the compliment of driving me, and I pay you a compliment of another kind equal in value."

"Long life to your Lordship's honour," cried Jim; "that's it, exactly." And off he walked to "give a touch" to the harness.

"Jim, are those horses good?" enquired his Lordship.

"Is it *my* bastes your honour's asking about? To be sure they are. Don't you see 'em, my Lord?" assuming a look of extreme surprise.

"I *do* see them, Jim," replied the English lord, laughing with all the *bonhommie* of a candidate for the "sweet voices" of an

Irish county. "And because I see they don't look good, I want to know from you if they really are."

"Looks are decaitful, my Lord, sometimes. Them, now, are quality bastes, for all they don't seem so; the raal quality I mane, that has no concate about 'em,—like your honour, for all the world; baring they don't look so like quality-bastes as your honour's Lordship does like a quality gintleman. But 'tisn't every one, you know, my Lord, that has the chance to be born grand and iligant, and clever-looking," glancing, with a smile half shy, half servile, at the really distinguished figure of Lord Warringdon.

Now, although the noble Viscount had read in so many bright eyes, and had even heard from so many beautiful lips, that he was one of the most *distingué* men that the owners of the said eyes and lips had ever seen, he was not so *blasé*, with respect to compliments on his personal appearance, as to hear with unconcern the impression he had made upon a ragged Irish post-boy. So he inquired no more into the merits of Jem's "bastes," but, still laughing, jumped into the carriage.

"Curious people, these Irish fellows," he observed to Mr. Wilmot, who was already seated. "How well the rogue turned off my enquiries about his horses! You could furnish all Europe with diplomatists as well as soldiers."

"Very right. We are, indeed, a most devilishly troublesome set of fellows; a nation of soldiers and cabinet ministers *en brut*, but not so difficult to manage, after all, if any one would take the trouble of trying. Talk and laugh with our lower orders, and you win them at once; and, since you start on this plan, I predict that your Lordship will make a successful canvass. You have already, I see, made a conquest of Jim," he added smiling: "but what are we waiting for? Kelly! bid him drive on, and pretty fast, too, or we shall be late on the road. Recollect we have five and thirty miles to go. You will excuse my taking the master on me," said he, turning to his companion; "for the miles are Irish ones, too."

"Take care, for your life, would you dhrive fast, Jim," said Kelly, us he mounted one of his master's horses, the other having been given to Lord Warringdon's gentleman-in-waiting—"Never mind what the masther says, Jim. Dhrive asy, and God bless you, or you'll smash us to atoms."

"A-thin, Mr. Kelly, one would think, to hear you, you thought you were spaking to an ignoramus. Sure it isn't the first time I wint his honour's roads, nor won't be the last either, plase God! Troth, I've a right to know 'em by this time, as well as the nose

in my face. I wouldn't dhrive hard, if you'd give my weight in goold, since the time I dhruv the officers' ladies up to Misther M'Alpine's. They never gave me pace or ase till I wint smart. Well, I done as I was bid; and, by my conscience, *if* I did, sure I smashed my pole."

"Murdher! smashed your pole! and spilt the ladies on the roa, Jim?"

"Troth an' I didn't, Mr. Kelly."

"A-thin, what did you do with them, then, Jim?"

"Dhruv 'em without a taste of a pole, good or bad."

"You did, Jim?"

"I did, in troth."

"A-thin, tell us how, and God bless ye."

"Ah! a way of my own, I have," replied Jim, looking very knowing. "An' *I* wouldn't tell it to any body, 'cause I'd lose my custom, intirely, for dhriving through desperate places. There's ne'er a boy at Mr. Costelloe's but mysel' that can go that road, and come back alive; so I get all the jobs on it. And they're the best to be had any where—always worth three half-crowns more to me than any o' the others. So, Mr. Kelly, I'll do my endavours not to smash the vahacle; but if I have that bad luck, I'll do as you bid me, purtend 'twas all my own fault, or lay the blame on my poor bastes. Troth, the young Lord wasn't out in regard of 'em; they're miserable looking craturs, sure enough; they were the worst I could find in the stable; so, 'twill be quite asy to make him think, if he sticks in a bog-hole, 'tis all their doin's, to say nothing of the dhriver, he added"—smiling roguishly.

At length they drove off, followed by the blessings of the crowd at the inn-door, in exchange for some more substantial tokens of good will on the part of the new candidate, and of that of their old and popular representative. The road lay t hrough a wild country, with scarcely a trace of human habitation. For the first few miles they whirled along tolerably well, and Jim looked behind every now and then, with a smile of triumph. As they proceeded, however, the jolting became "rather disagreable." A little further on, "very disagreeable,"—and at last Lord Warringdon exclaimed at it, "as damnably disagreeable."

"Jim!" he cried "drive more carefully, shaking me t death!" you are

"Shaking you to death! my God, am I, my Lord? think o' that. I'll dhrive asy—that was just a bad spot that I didn't know was tit, my Lord. I wondher how it came in it; for this road gets the

applause from all the roads in Ireland, for its goodness, my Lord—'Tis as smooth as butthermilk, mostly."

"It is any thing but that, now," muttered his Lordship.

Jolt after jolt came, and each time the veracious Jim assured his Lordship that "'twas the last bad spot" on this best road in Ireland.

"The devil himself must have possessed me, when I first thought of coming into this infernal country," said the wretched candidate to himself, as he looked on the dreary waste around, and felt the rocks under him. "And I dare not complain—but must grin with delight all the time I am becoming pounded into a jelly!"

"Poor devil, I pity him, really I do, upon my soul!" murmured Wilmot, as he looked on the compressed lips and contracted brows of his young companion, which bore evidence alike to the extremity of his suffering, and the heroism of his endurance.—"This road is really very bad," said he, with the tone of a man surprised at the discovery of a certain quality never before suspected to exist in an admired object—"I am afraid you are sadly shaken, my dear Lord?"

"A little," replied the Viscount, endeavouring to suppress a groan—"Oh, it is nothing at all; a mere trifle. How far are we from Castle Wilmot, now?"

"Not yet quite half-way," answered Mr. Wilmot.

"My God! I shall never get there alive," sighed his unfortunate companion to himself.

Mr. Wilmot did his best to beguile the tedium, and, alas! tortures, of the journey, by telling amusing anecdotes of the gentry and peasantry in his neighbourhood. Nay, he took more interesting ground, and counted up the best interests, and enlarged on the best way of conciliating them; in fact, laboured to combine instruction and entertainment in his discourse. And Lord Warringdon tried all that man could try, to laugh at his host's capital stories. He knew that, both for the sake of the jester, and for the intrinsic value of the jest, if he had a laugh in him, he should bestow it on the present occasion; but the most he could accomplish was a smile; and even that was a miserable attempt, resembling rather the convulsion effected by the galvanic battery, than the graceful indication of pleasure, which usually set off the handsome mouth of the once captivating, but now suffering "exclusive."

All he had hitherto endured, however, was but "the crumpling of the roses" compared with what followed. The concussions became absolutely terrific—a seventy-four running aground might experience something like the joltings and bumpings of our poor car-

riage, as it swung from side to side ; now ascending to the heavens above, now descending to the depths below—ncw Mr. Wilmot tumbling over Lord Warringdon, and now, for variety, Lord Warringdon tumbling over Mr. Wilmot.

"What luck we had, sir," said Kelly, putting his head in at the carriage-window, and assuming a guileless, innocent expression of face, which deceived even his master—"What luck we had, to get this vagabone of a Jim to dhrive us—he's as dhrunk as a piper."

"Is he really?" enquired Mr. Wilmot.

"Sure, if he wasn't dhrunk, and as dhrunk as a baste, too" continued he, looking steadily at his master, and glancing with a smile at Lord Warringdon, who sat with his head between his hands, utterly exhausted,—"Sure if he wasn't he wouldn't be dhriving the way he is ; isn't he shaking you to bits ? doesn't that shew he must be dhrunk, when any one but himself, the blackguard, would dhrive so asy, you might thread a needle, going along. I'm afraid you are terribly joulted, my Lord ?" added Mr. Kelly, in a commiserating tone.

"I am half dead," faintly articulated his Lordship.

"Upon my conscience," continued Kelly, "I've the greatest mind in the world to dismount, and give that dhrunken baste of a Jim as fine a flogging as he ever got in his life, for his impidence."

"For God's sake, do not," cried Lord Warringdon, "or we shall be left on the road all night."

"Won't I my, Lord? Oh, very well, I won't if your Lordship doesn't like I'd do it," replied Kelly, affecting submission to Lord Warringdon's request ; "but if if wasn't for you, my Lord, upon my word and credit, Jim Naughten would be very little obleeged to himself this mornin', I can tell him that. Jim! you dhrunken baste! how dare you dhrive that way ? if it wasn't for Lord Warringdon's begging you off, I'd bate you while ever I could stand over ye, you villain ye!"

"Long life to your Lordship!" roared Jim, "long life to your honour's Lordship, Member of Parliament for the county of——, long life to him ; he's a jewel of a boy—huzza! huzza!" and he whirled his hat over his head, playing all the antics beseeming his supposed condition.

Kelly cantered to his side—"I'm proud of ye, Jim ; I always knew you were the devil for dhriving—but, upon my word and credit, Jim, you flog all ever I seen, for dhriving to-day. Any one but yourself, would have had the carriage in *smithereens* long ago. Faith, Jim, I think you must have a *charum* from the good people for dhriving."

"Oh! Mr. Kelly, you pay me too many compliments entirely, sir," replied Jim, trying to look abashed—"I'm proud to have your applause, but, indeed, it far exceeds my deservings, Mr. Kelly."

Jim thought no such thing; on the contrary, no praise he ever received came up to his notions of his own merit on a bad road. "How's the masther? I'm afraid he's kilt."

"No, indeed, thank God, he isn't," replied Mr. Kelly; "he's used to it, you know, Jim."

"And the other poor cratur?" demanded Jim.

"Oh—he's bedevilled, intirely."

"A-thin is he? no wondher troth; God knows mysel' pities him, the cratur!" and here Jim "gave a taste of the whip" to his "bastes," and Mr. Kelly fell back to do the civilties by Mr. Symmons, Lord Warringdon's gentleman. Not that Mr. Kelly particularly affected Mr. Symmons, but because Mr. Kelly stood in the light of host to Mr. Symmons, who had hitherto ridden along, silent and disdainful, as if he were the very incarnation of superciliousness; Lord Warringdon's success among the wild Irish not enough inresting him to induce Mr. Symmons to compromise his own pretensions to *ton*, by condescending to commune with such utter barbarians. At length, however, he broke silence.

"I always thought that people of fortune in Ireland kept their carriages."

"You thought very right, Mr. Symmons," replied Mr. Kelly, with his usual urbanity.

"But they are not like English ones, you know."

"To be sure they are; what else would they be like?" rejoined the Irishman of cast clothes.

"Why, English carriages are built for English roads; and Irish carriages are contrived, of course, for Irish roads."

"Irish roads!" repeated Kelly, with affected astonishment, but very genuine displeasure—"Irish roads," he continued, resuming his former tone of civility, are like English ones, I suppose."

"Indeed, I suppose no such thing," replied Mr. Symmons.

"Why, what's the difference?" asked the other.

"Rather an important one," returned Mr. Symmons, sarcastically. The English roads are proverbially the best in Europe; and the Irish ones, judging by my own experience, are the worst. As for this, to be candid with you, I never saw any thing like it, my good fellow."

"Well, 'tis something, any how, to see what one never seen before," replied Mr. Kelly, with provoking quietness. May be you'll

be seeing more surprising things than that again, before you lave us."

"Indeed!" rejoined the "exclusive" valet, not condescending, however, to make any enquiries touching these wonders. "Pray when shall we arrive at the next town?"

"There's no town in it," returned his companion, sulkily.

"No town!" exclaimed Mr. Symmons, much suprised. "Well, village, or whatever you call it—where can I procure a bowl of soup?"

"Cock ye up with your bowl of soup!" muttered the angry Hibernian—"ye impident, concated whelp!" Then he continued aloud—"We don't stop at any place, only to beat the horses." Kelly meant to bait, not to flagellate them, as his occasionally affected fine pronunciation might have led the reader to imagine.

"I shall be starved, man," exclaimed Mr. Symmons; "why the deuce didn't you tell me this before?"

"Why didn't I tell you what?" enquired Mr. Kelly, composedly.

"Why, that there is nothing to be got to eat in this bog"—He stopped abruptly, catching a glance of the Irishman's eye, which he did not think encouraged his finishing the sentence. "I meant, Mr. Kelly, to ask you why you did not tell me there was no Inn in this part of the country, and I should then have put up a few sandwiches, or a cold chicken, or so, just to keep up my strength a little."

"To tell you the thruth, Mr. Symmons, I thought when the masthers done without could chickens, the servants might:" returned Mr. Kelly, with imperturbable composure.

"Confound the fellow's impudence!" muttered Mr. Symmons. "Servants and masters, upon my word! there's radicalism and equality with a vengeance. Lord Warringdon," he resumed, aloud, "can fast better than I can—I have a bad digestion, and have been ordered by my physician to eat frequently and at regular hours."

"The ape! I wish to the Lord I had lave of the masther to give him something of my own cooking, to help his digestion."

A silence of some moments ensued, which was broken a second time by Mr. Symmons.

"Pray, when shall we come to your master's estate?"

"My masther's estate!" cried Mr. Kelly, sure what else have you been thravelling through, all day? and havn't half gone over it yet;" he added, with all the pride of an Irish follower.

"'Humph! so all this bog," cried Mr. Symmons, laying somewhat offensive emphasis on the last word, "all this bog, then, is the Wilmot estate—" and something very like a sneer played round Mr. Symmons' mouth.

"Yes," replied Mr. Kelly, very wrathful, "all this bog, and some more bogs besides, and a great dale that isn't bog, belongs to Misther Wilmot of Wilmot Castle—the first intherest in the county, and the largest property in the province—Upon my conscience!" he muttered in a lower key—"I never had so much throuble in my life to keep my hands off a concated ass of his kind, than I have this blessed minute, not just to take and chuck him, fair and asy! into the middle of that same bog he's passing his remark upon, so mighty busy!"

"I cannot imagine," proceeded Mr. Symmons, "where all your voters come from—I have not seen a house yet, nor a tree, nor any thing giving one the idea of human habitation. You know the capital stories we have in England about Irish voters?" he went on facetiously—"shall I tell you one of them?"

"I'd advise ye not:" answered Kelly, speaking very quietly, but looking as if he were just in the humour to enforce his recommendation, if necessary, by some argument more cogent than words.

Just then, luckily perhaps, for Mr. Symmons' bones, Mr. Kelly's attention was attracted towards Jim, whose cries of "Hee-up! hee-up!" resounded in every note of the Irish scale of intonation. Then Jim chirped, coaxed, and cursed, talked, exhorted, and flogged; did every thing in his power, in fact, by reason and coercion, to induce his horses to get out of the bog-hole, into which they had sunk up to their shoulders. But, alas! the harder he flogged, the deeper they floundered—he was at his wits' end.

"What's the matter, Jim," enquired Kelly, who had seen the confusion, while engaged in his amiable colloquy with Mr. Symmons, and had hastened to learn the cause. "What's the matter, Jim?" he repeated.

"Oh! my God!" returned Jim, impatiently—"havn't ye eyes in your head, man? don't ye see what's the matter? I'm bogged, and, more be token, 'twas in this very same place I smashed my pole in, last year: 'the curse of the cross upon it!'"

"Give 'em a taste of the whip, Jim."

"Give 'em a taste of the divil! A-thin, Mr. Kelly, will ye jist throw a look at the craturs, and see the condition they are in—up to their shoulders in bog! What's this for at all?" roared Jim, tearing his hair in desperation and flinging his hat on the ground—"What in the world will I do? Mr. Kelly—God bless you! and tell me what's to become of us, at all!"

"What are you stopping for?" cried Mr. Wilmot from one

window. "Has any accident happened the carriage?" cried Lord Warringdon, from the other.

"No sir—no, my Lord:" replied the veracious worthies addressed—"nothing at all, only a bit o' the harness that wint wrong."

"Mr. Kelly—" re-demanded Jim, half crying, "what will I do at all?"

Mr. Kelly mused a second; then mounted the coach-box—surveyed the country in all directions; and his face suddenly brightened—"Now we have it!" he exclaimed, joyfully—and placing his bent fingers in his mouth, whistled shrilly and long. Almost immediately, figures were discernible, moving along the brow of a hill, that skirted the road—and in less than five minutes, fifty or sixty stout fellows came jumping and holloing across the bog.

"Glory be to the Lord, for all his mercies this day!" sighed Jim, making the sign of the cross.

"We are going to be robbed and murdered:" thought Mr. Symmons—"these Irish monsters are capable of any atrocity;" and he was preparing to save himself from the ferocious Mountaineers, by clapping spurs to his horse, but was prevented by a command from his master to examine into the state of the springs of the carriage; Lord Warringdon having certain misgivings as to the dependance to be placed on Jim's assertion, that "nothing at all was the matter."

When the group of peasants saw that Mr. Wilmot was one of the *bogged* travellers, they threw up their hats and shouted for joy.

"Here! boys!" cried Kelly, "lift it out, body and bones—horses and all! first three cheers for the masther, and then put your shoulders to the wheels—here it goes! a long pull, a sthrong pull, and a pull altogether! now boys"

As desired, they gave first the three cheers, so long and so loud, that Lord Warringdon pressed his hands to his ears—they then "put their shoulders to the wheel," and placed the carriage once more on Terra Firma.

"Thank ye, my men:" said Mr. Wilmot.

"Thank ye, my fine fellows:" said Lord Warringdon.

"Ye're welcome, ye're welcome, to that, and more;" returned they, good-humouredly.

"This is Lord Warringdon, come to canvass the county;" observed Mr. Wilmot.

"And yourselves, my honest fellows, among the number:"—added Lord Warringdon.

"Och! the masther is the one you must ax, my Lord:" replied

the spokesman, with a smile—"We always vote the way the masther plazes, you know;" he added, however, with courtesy characteristic, (in those days,) of an Irish peasant, and more particularly of a———Irish peasant. "Not but, indeed, we'd be glad, t'would be, for your honour's Lordship, he'd bid us vote; ye're welcome to Ireland, and the county———."

"Thank ye, thank ye, my honest fellows here's a couple of guineas to drink your master's health."

"And here's something to drink success to Lord Warringdon;" said Mr. Wilmot.

"Long life to ye both!" cried many voices—"the masther and the masther's frind, for ever!"

"Lord Warringdon for ever!" cried Mr. Wilmot, who desired to give the candidate a more definite designation than that of "the masther's friend."

"Warringdon for ever!" they echoed—Warringdon and Wilmot for ever! huzza! huzza!" and they shouted after the departing travellers, with all the energy and deafening clamour of threescore of Irishmen, with money in their pockets and good will in their hearts.

"Well, misther Symmons, what do ye think of Irish '*voters*,' now? what would ye take to tell one of them boys the comical stories ye have in England about 'em?"

Mr. Symmons was pleased to observe that "they were fine fellows," and there the conversation ended.

The road began to improve as they drew near to Castle Wilmot. Traces of Jim Flanagan's handiwork became apparent, by the diminution of jolts and accession of speed. Lord Warringdon, overpowered with fatigue, had sunk into a pleasing oblivion of aching bones. Mr. Wilmot amused himself with his thoughts. Mr. Symmons was grand—Mr. Kelly, and his humble friend, and ardent admirer, Jim Naughten, agreed that the above-mentioned Mr. Symmons "was a fantastical *omadhoun*, that would never be good for any thing till he got a taste of the shillelagh;" and thus all journeyed along, until the plantations of Castle Wilmot gladdened their sight. Bonfires were burning on all the heights far and near, in honour of the master's return. A huge one was blazing at the Castle Wilmot gate, in honour of their noble guest; and much whiskey was drunk, and much tobacco smoked, to testify their joy on his arrival; "lashins," of both those luxuries having been sent out by Lady Anne. Lord Warringdon was aroused from his slumber at ten o'clock at night by a shout of welcome. In the confusion of the moment, he forgot where he

was, and seeing the huge fire, and the wild countenances and tattered garb of the revellers gathered round it, he half-imagined he might have fallen among a set of Irish cannibals, who had prepared a fire to roast him at. This delusion was, however, but momentary. Mr. Wilmot's kind voice, bidding him welcome, recalled him to a sense of his real situation. He alighted, but could scarcely stand, so crippled, jolted, and bruised was he. As the mob huzzaed, he tried to bow and smile, however, and although nearly driven mad by the deep guttural roar of the men, and the shrill scream of the women and children, expressed himself delighted beyond measure at their flattering reception.

"Ye're late, sir;" observed Pat Murphy, as he led the way, with lights into the house. "My Lady, and the young ladies, was mighty unasy about your'e not coming to dinner, sir."

"The road was so bad," returned his master, "we could not come sooner."

"The road bad? was it indeed, sir?" exclaimed Pat, "'tis newly come to it, that's all I can say—ye're welcome, my Lord."

"Thank ye, my good fellow:" he replied.

"Are you lame, my Lord? you seem to tread tinder."

"No—only stiff from jolting:" replied his lordship.

"That Jim must have dhruv you mighty bad;" observed Pat.

"Bring us something to eat, directly, Pat;" said Mr. Wilmot, and, meantime, allow me to pioneer you to the drawing-room, my Lord."

But his Lordship objected to appearing in such trim before ladies; it was therefore arranged that they should sup by themselves in another room; and defer the presentation till the morrow.

CHAPTER VI.

For some days after his arrival at Castle-Wilmot, Lord Warrington continued to feel the effects of Mr. Wilmot's roads, and Jim Nauhgton's driving. Nothing, however, could be more polite than were his assurances of satisfaction, and, indeed, admiration, of all he saw and heard, ate and drank, at Castle Wilmot.

"My journey," said he, smiling, "seems quite like an incident in a fairy tale. After having wandered throug hgrand andextensive soli-

tudes, under the care of a powerful enchanter, at a stroke of his wand, the scene changes, and I find myself in a noble and ancient castle, surrounded by luxuries of every description ; by all that can charm the eye, or gratify the taste ; and, though last mentioned, not the least appreciated, the smiles of fair and gentle ladies."

Under the united influences of capital living (he had game and fish in perfection and abundance) and of cheerful society, Lord Warringdon was "the moral of a nice gentleman," if Pat Murphy be considered good authority ;—we think that he is. In fact, the candidate continued in high good humour, amused at every thing, and even, in his turn, condescending to amuse.

"Amuse! Warringdon amuse! why he is one of us, you know ; the thing is impossible !"

Dear people ! we crave a moment's explanation. In the first place, pray recollect that your noble and apathetic brother is no longer in town ; alas! not even in his elegant retirement in the country : nay, that he no longer treads English soil, "at all, at all ;" that, in fact, he is in Ireland. Now, unfortunately, there is some thing in the very air of Ireland which acts on the most pertinaciously rigid muscles, and makes those laugh who never laughed before, and never may again. In the second place, recollect that man is a gregarious animal. The individual, separated by some unlucky chance from his own herd, will fall in with another herd of his species. In the third place, consider he was not only alone in a country where apathy is ignorantly mistaken for stupidity, but also that he was absolutely necessitated, as a candidate, to make himself popular. And now, have we, evenrpartially, succeeded in vindicating your erring friend ?

But, to continue, as we, story-tellers, say :

The young Lord, recollecting his father's caution concerningLady Anne's match-making talents, observed her carefully ; and to his surprise and satisfaction, found in her habitual manner a decided refutation of the alleged gift.

Her Ladyship had been very pretty ; she was still interesting, and even loveable. There was about her a softness and simplicity almost approaching to *naïveté* which quite precluded the supposition of the existence of *arriéres pensées* of any kind. All seemed clear and open as the noon-day.

"What a fool my father must be," thought the experienced Viscount, "to have suspected such an unaffected, unartificial woman as this is, of being a match-maker ! I never yet knew him form a correct estimate of character." And so, principally that he

might have the satisfaction of proving his father wrong, he was unwittingly running the road to prove him right.

But Lady Anne only puzzled Lord Warringdon. She was, in truth, a consummate actress: a female Proteus, who, if it became necessary, could change, at will, her very nature. She followed, to the very letter, the scriptural injunction of "being all things to all men;" and her facility in penetrating the motives and views of others fully equalled the variety and perfection of her own powers of transformation. She instantly saw, therefore, what was likely "to take" with Lord Warringdon, and manœuvred accordingly.

Upon hearing of his intended visit, she had arranged, at once, to marry him to one of her daughters; but could not decide which, till she should have slightly studied the "*carte du pays.*"

"Though educated with precisely the same care, my two unmarried girls are provokingly dissimilar," she said to herself, *to herself*, observe; for think not that Lady Anne kept any other confidante: "had Isabel Maria's good sense, or had Maria Isabel's beauty, I never could meet any difficulties in my path. But I am, at present, placed thus: this man may, perhaps, be attracted by Isabel's beauty; but if he should happen to prove ugly, or silly, the world will not get Isabel to take any pains about him. Again; Maria, who would make no difficulty as to taking him, *he* may not choose to have. So, and in this teazing way, I am continually thwarted in my best-laid plans."

After the Viscount's arrival, and that she had reconnoitred him, Lady Anne decided on marrying him to her youngest daughter. She felt, however, rather unwilling to hurt Maria's feelings by abruptly announcing her fiat; and trusted, therefore, to some favourable occasion for indirectly conveying it.

She and Maria were sitting alone, soon after the appearance of their guest.

"I have been studying Warringdon's character very carefully," observed Lady Anne, "and he is suspicious."

"Most young men of fortune are," rejoined Maria.

"I know:" returned Lady Anne, "*that*, however, I don't so much mind; one could easily throw him off his guard. But I'm sorry to say he is a thorough man of the world; has no feeling; never will fall in love."

"Tisn't necessary that he should," said Maria, rising to stir the fire.

"Not always necessary, I grant you; but certainly highly desirable; and, in this case, I fear, absolutely indispensable."

"Why?" asked Maria.

"Because," answered her mother, "he is not the sort of man one can easily persuade to fancy himself in love, when he is not. Neither is he the sort of man to commit himself, by some nonsensical speech, that means nothing, but which a girl's family choose to call something, and which a father, or a brother, calls him out for. In a word, he is a man never carried away by feeling; always on his guard not to say what might be made a handle of against him on some future occasion; cold and cautious, though apparently the very reverse."

"Bad materials for *our* purpose," observed Maria; "but your conclusions jump with my own, Mamma. So *I*, at any rate, must consider them to be well founded; and it is clear that I can have no chance, and Isabel, I fear, but a bad one."

Lady Anne secretly rejoiced at this voluntary renouncing of all claims on Lord Warringdon, on Maria's part; yet seemingly acquiescing in her daughter's opinion, observed, "I believe you are right; and, since you give up the pursuit, Maria, we must jointly take measures in favour of Isabel. For, although I do consider it difficult to manage him, I do *not*, by any means, look upon it as impossible. To begin our one little plot, then:—Whatever either of us may think of Warringdon, we must say nothing to Isabel on the subject, but deceive her, like a child, for her own good. She must imagine herself captivated by him, or she will never even try to attract him; that is, in a serious, business-like way—you know all her romantic nonsense about affections and sympathies. Now, Warringdon is incapable of loving any thing but himself, but she must not think so, or she would not love him."

"But what is the use of making her love him," interrupted Maria, "or even fancy she does, if he be, as you say, too cold to fall in love, himself, and too cunning to suffer any body to marry him, if he does *not*?"

"Very true," rejoined Lady Anne, "but I will make *him*, too, dream that he is in love."

"Dream it!" exclaimed Maria, laughing, "a *blasé* man like that? Dear mamma! what can you be thinking of? A simple boy, just come of age, brought up in a country clergyman's family, one might possibly persuade out of his own senses; but, even you," she added playfully tapping her mother's cheek, "would fail in such an experiment on a man about town, like our right honourable and well esteemed guest, Viscount Warringdon. Dream it, indeed!—never—never!"

Lady Anne listened with the utmost composure to her daughter's mockery, and proceeded thus.—"The difficulty you state is a considerable one, I admit, indeed I have before hinted it myself. Yet, I hope, by my mode of attack, to prove it is not, at least, insuperable—Lord Warringdon, wherever he goes, finds himself an object of attraction to daughters, and of speculation to mothers—he is therefore continually on the *qui vive*, like the garrison of a besieged town, in fear of a *coup de main*, in fact, he is, mark me, on his guard against *designing* mammas. But in me he shall nothing find save simplicity and innocence."

"Yes, but as you want him to devour Isabel, and not yourself, what good will all the simplicity and innocence in the world, on your part, signify?" interrupted Maria, with a laugh.

"You must give me time, my dear Maria, to develope my plans. He never can suspect so indifferent and unguarded a mother as I shall appear to him to be; he must acquit me, at once, of deep design—of malice prepense—of premeditated evil. More than that. I shall make him think not only that I do not want his alliance, but that I actually avoid it."

"And how will you contrive that?"

"By appearing to have somebody else in view for Isabel."

"That would be an excellent method certainly, but who can you have in view?"

"M'Alpine," replied Lady Anne.

"M'Alpine!" echoed Maria. "Warringdon will never think that you could prefer such a creature to him."

"Yes, he must though; for I shall give him to understand that Isabel is engaged to M'Alpine. You know he is dying for her, and the least encouragement would be enough to bring him to her feet."

"Yes," said Maria, "but Isabel will never consent to a project so full of what she would call artifice and deception."

"I don't intend that she shall know we have any project of the kind—I shall persuade her that I really wish her to marry M'Alpine."

"Still I cannot see, for the life of me, how persuading her to marry M'Alpine, is to be the means of marrying her to Warringdon."

"You are really very dull this morning, my dear Maria. I do not intend, of course, *absolutely* persuading her to marry M'Alpine, only making her and every one else think that I do."

"Ah, yes, now I understand your meaning perfectly," rejoined

Maria, "But if Warringdon is not in love with her, himself, what will he care whom she marries?"

"I know human nature, at least, men-of-fashion-nature, better than you do, Maria. Lord Warringdon is a man of pretention, vain of his person, vain of his fashion, vain of his rank and position in society, vain of his talent (for he has some). He cannot, therefore, exist without being admired; his vanity then will be gratified by the preference which Isabel will unconsciously betray, for she is a bad dissembler. On the other hand, he will be piqued by my apparent negligence—so, to spite the mother, he will marry the daughter—is not that a tolerable scheme?"

"Very," answered Maria, musing.

"And feasible?" asked her mother.

"Humph, as for that, I have my doubts. To me it appears somewhat theoretical."

"I wager you a Chantilly veil I succeed," said Lady Anne, smiling.

"Done!" cried Maria. And here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of visitors.

CHAPTER VI.

Upon all his canvassing visits, within riding distance, Lord Warringdon was accompanied by the young ladies as well as by their father; Lady Anne's object being to establish a certain intimacy between the parties, before she stepped in, with Mr. M'Alpine, in her hand, to break it up. These excursions were, like most equestrian parties of ladies and gentlemen, highly favourable for beginning and continuing a flirtation. Indeed, Lady Anne insisted that riding was infinitely more useful than walking for getting on with the men, combining, as she said, the advantages of a *tête-à-tête* (which you can always manage without having the air of arranging), with all the gaiety and frankness warranted by social manners and intercourse. Then, ladies are timid on horseback, and require many little offices of gallanty and protection.

Upon the favourable occasions alluded to, Isabel scarce ever pre-

tended to be alarmed,—we can say so much for her. But, when a little frightened, at her horse sticking in a bog, or backing towards the edge of a precipice on a mountain road, she certainly affected to be more so; encouraging, in fact, rather than contending with her fears. For, though not tutored by her mother, Isabel was aware how interesting a woman appears to a man when claiming, evidently against her own will, or design, his protection.

Well, the Viscount proved a very attentive cavalier. Why so? As much for the sake of the daughter's beauty, as the father's votes? Ask Lady Anne. Lord Warringdon, himself, said *to* himself, that she chatted agreeably; was well-mannered, and, altogether, "a very nice person."

Poor Isabel, on her part, was even better disposed towards him.—In her eyes he appeared to be more than "a very nice person;"—he was a loveable one. She thought him strikingly handsome, and possessing all the polish of high breeding, without its coldness. We must add that he could be agreeable, too, in many ways; among the rest, by telling anecdotes of people known to his auditors, either personally or by report; or by repeating good things which he had heard; and, as the actor often gets more credit by his personification of a character than the author for its delineation of it, so Lord Warringdon earned from Isabel a reputation for cleverness, merely on the strength of his recollections, and adaptation of the cleverness of others. To conclude; he had spent much time abroad; spoke the foreign languages well,—for an Englishman, surprisingly well; knew a little of many things, and took the tone of knowing a great deal of all:—in a word, was just the one to be a "pleasant fellow" among men, and a "nice creature" among women.

But suppose the Viscount had not been heir to an earldom, and a hundred thousand per annum, very little encumbered? Would Isabel's usual penetration have failed, in that case, to discern in him some points less to his advantage? Again we say, ask Lady Anne. And, like another personage, not to be named, just as we speak of her Ladyship, she re-appears on the scene.

The time had come to avail herself of Mr. M'Alpine;—she was a little puzzled how to get at him; Mr. Wilmot entered the room with a letter in his hand, announcing Mr. M'Alpine's intended arrival that evening, to dinner.

Lord Warringdon and Isabel had been looking over some music, and he was requesting her to sing, and she was preparing to oblige him, when her mother exclaimed, "Good news, Isabel, M'Alpine is to be here almost immediately. Run off," she continued, in a

lower tone, but still loud enough to be overheard by Lord Warringdon, "run off and dress; I want you to be in your best looks to-day."

Isabel stared in astonishment. Her mother smiled:—Isabel was completely at fault.

"It is not time to dress yet," she observed, returning to the instrument.

"Isabel," resumed her mother, "I wish to speak with you a moment." And so saying she left the room, followed by her daughter, who could not help wondering why Mr. M'Alpine's arrival should be such good news to her, seeing she abominated him; and why she should take more pains with her toilette on this day than on any preceding one.

Her mother addressed her thus:—

"My dear Isabel, I have particular reasons, which I will explain to you some other time, for wishing you to please M'Alpine."

"But I cannot endure him, mamma; you know I cannot," interrupted Isabel.

"He is a worthy, excellent young man, and would make you a very good husband."

"God forbid!" returned Isabel; "I would rather die than marry him."

"Folly, my dear; any one who had not a prior attachment might very well contrive to marry him, and to like him very well, too. Pray, do you like any one else?"

"No;" replied Isabel, blushing and hesitating.

"Very well, then. I request that, since you have nothing to object against Mr. M'Alpine, except that you do not happen to be desperately in love with him, you will treat him with more consideration than hitherto you have been pleased to do. Also that you will henceforward think and act like other young women of your age and station, and not reject eligible offers because 'this man is too tall;' that 'too short;' one 'too fair;' another 'too dark;' somebody else because he doesn't sing; and somebody else because he sings too much. Your father can give you no money, and you are no longer a mere child; I would advise you, as your sincere friend, as well as your affectionate mother, to consider your position well, and if Mr. M'Alpine remain favourably disposed towards you, to accept his attentions. It will be much better than riding about, talking nonsense to Lord Warringdon, who will be off, to-morrow or next day, and if he happen to see you again, scarce remember you, perhaps."

Isabel coloured deeply, partly from confusion, and partly from indignation at her mother's supposition, but she remained silent.

"Do, my sweet Isabel, do as I wish you," continued Lady Anne, kissing her cheek; "you never will repent having followed my advice."

She then quitted Isabel, who did not return for some time to the sitting-room. That she had not passed the interval in very agreeable meditations might be inferred from a slight redness about her eyes, and a languor and dejection of manner, that struck and interested Lord Warringdon. He thought she had never looked so well; he told her so; and her pale cheek glowed,—and she looked away for a moment, and when their eyes met again, hers were filled with tears.

"Lord Warringdon," said Mr. Wilmot, "before M'Alpine comes, I must tell you what sort of person you are about to see. First, as the most important point, what he has,—then what he is. He has ten thousand a year, unencumbered: *that*, you will say, concerns Maria and Isabel more than you; but, however, this concerns you. He has the next best interest to mine in the county;—in politics, he is a staunch Tory, and so he is likely to remain, for he has not yet half provided for his poor relations;" (N.B. This was in the good, the halcyon days of Toryism in Ireland, when the favourite candidate was sure to be the one who would bestow, or promise, at least, the greatest number of places.) Mr. Wilmot proceeded: "Mr. M'Alpine and I are excellent friends; that's to say, we don't either of us care if the other broke his neck."

"My dear! my dear!" interrupted Lady Anne, "how can you talk so carelessly? Lord Warringdon will really believe you are serious; very extraordinary under our peculiar circumstances;" looking over at Isabel, "you should not, indeed, my love, say such things, really it is quite shocking." She said this in a hurried, deprecating tone, and then, resuming her usual manner,—"recollect the liberal support he has always afforded you, without stipulations of any kind for a single friend."

"Oh, I recollect perfectly," replied her husband, laughing; "he monopolizes all my interest, on the plea that he had not bargained, like others, before-hand. By Jove! his support was like the barbarian allies of the Roman empire, a service that cost dearer than his enmity."

Lady Anne fidgetted about while he was speaking, and seemed exceedingly annoyed, but why he could not well comprehend, not being aware that Mr. M'Alpine's failings were a forbidden subject

at Wilmot Castle, so he continued :—"Though my friend M'Alpine is the soul of honour, take care that you have witnesses to your conversation, or————no matter what," he added with a laugh, "But only if you have not a friend present, you may have to employ one on less amiable business, some future day; as I was once obliged to do, and my friend M'Alpine then immediately remembered all he had forgotten. Pistols are wonderful helps to a treacherous memory."

Did you ever hear any thing like your father?" exclaimed Lady Anne, addressing her eldest daughter, "to talk in such a way of M'Alpine before Isabel—highly improper."

"What's improper?" enquired Mr. Wilmot.

Lady Anne remained silent, shaking her pretty little foot in assumed displeasure.

"What's improper, Anne, my love?" enquired he once more.

"Your abuse of Mr. M'Alpine, my dear."

"My abuse! I am not abusing the man at all—I don't care about him one way or the other."

"Yes! but that is the very thing I complain of,—you ought to care."

"Why, my love?"

"My dear Wilmot," rejoined Lady Anne, "you must forget, surely."

"I can't imagine," said he to himself, "what the devil she is at."

The rapid approach of horsemen up the ascent to the castle turned the conversation. A few minutes afterwards, Mr. M'Alpine made his appearance amid the group.

"Delighted to see you," said Lady Anne, in her softest tone of welcome.

"How dy'e do, my dear fellow?" said Mr. Wilmot, "glad to see you. And Mr. Wilmot *was* glad to see him, because it happened to be in his own house, and there his greatest enemy would no longer be treated, or even considered, as such. We shall take advantage of the half-hour before dinner, to give a sketch of the *morale* and *physique* of Mr. M'Alpine, of M'Alpine Castle.

To begin with his outward man, that being the more important division of the two-fold nature of a young male acquaintance. Mr. M'Alpine was considered by all who had the pleasure of knowing him, (except himself) as a specially ill-looking person. 'Tis fair to state, however, what really *was* his appearance, in order that our readers may judge whether he, or his acquaintances, were right. He was very tall, and very thin, with a very short body, and

very long limbs, that were always straying about to all points of the compass, as if each was setting forward, by itself, on a voyage of discovery through the world. His hair was very red; his eyes very white; his teeth very yellow; his mouth very wide; and his nose very broad—so far for his person. With respect to his mind, Nature had dealt a little more favourably by him. Originally he had not been quite deficient in intellect; but, unfortunately, his early education had been neglected; in fact, Mr. M'Alpine arrived at years of discretion, before he became heir-at-law to his present estate, seven or eight good people having been in the entail upon it: gradually, however, they died without "issue in tail male"—and when he succeeded to the property, he could barely read and write. He had sufficient good sense, however, to feel his deficiencies; and gave a still rarer proof of understanding, by endeavouring to remedy them. He bought good books, and read them and profited by them, and thus effected wonders; but, unluckily, he imagined, comparing himself with himself, that as he now knew much more than he formerly had done, he actually knew more than any one had ever known before him. Eventually he decided in his own mind that nothing could equal him in knowledge or beauty, and, consequently, put a high price on himself "in the marrying way;" and though he was always talking of taking a wife, never could be induced to decide, lest he might, as he said, "throw himself away." While he was thus deliberating, Isabel Wilmot returned from the Continent, the theme of universal admiration. He soon came to the solemn determination "that she was just the person worthy of becoming Mrs. M'Alpine." He did not, however, say too much in commendation of her, lest he should raise the market on himself; only pronouncing her to be "a nice girl, certainly, and if married to a man she loved, one that would turn out a charming woman; but all depended on that; at present she thinks too much of herself a great *dale*." Occasionally Mr. M'Alpine's pronunciation was somewhat broad, and formed a curious and amusing contrast with his flown style and sentimentality.—"She wants anim*a*tion," (we mark thus a pecuilar drawling emphasis in Mr. M'Alpine's articulation) "because as yet she's indifferent about *plasing*, but once let her love a man of a certain order of mind, and she will be absolutely seraphic—she's clever, and accomplished, and beautiful; but she's not, as yet, inter*e*sting, because, as yet she has not loved." So, to give the finishing touch to Isabel's perfections, he did all in his power to inspire her with a passion. But the young lady, someway,

was deficient in taste, as well as gratitude, and by no means seconded Mr. M'Alpine's benevolent views for her improvement.

Maria thought it a thousand pities that the owner of M'Alpine Castle should be lost to the family, so she laughed, and talked, and laboured, might and main, to get into his good graces,—all to no purpose; a pleasant, lively, off-hand girl, was his detestation. Take notice, Mr. M'Alpine was all romance and refinement. "Maria Wilmot has no softness, no sentiment, no manner; besides, I MUST have, he would sometimes say, grinning, and displaying his terrific set of teeth, besides I MUST have a fine woman—that is an indispensable necessary of life to me; beauty is the aliment of *my* existence. No—if I take either, it shall be Isabel. I fix on her." But though he fixed upon Isabel, Isabel did not fix upon him. He continued, however, to call her stiffness, reserve, and her coldness, modesty; never for an instant suspecting they could be any thing else, where he was in question.

Lady Anne had not yet decided whether she should make her younger daughter marry him, or make him marry her elder, when the arrival of Lord Warringdon caused her to change her whole plan of operations. She now courted him, upon the principle that we offer a plate of meat to one lap-dog, intended for another—by the way, this neat and appropriate simile reminds us that it is time to return to our family party, whom we left counting the minutes until dinner should be announced.

CHAPTER VII.

ALL are now seated at dinner. Lord Warringdon's thoughts and attentions (we will not say his affections, because, like Lady Anne, we are not quite sure he has any) are divided between a plate of salmon, just out of the water, and the pretty downcast eyes of his fair and flirting equestrian companion, Isabel. But when we state that his attentions were thus divided, we do not take upon ourselves to assert that the division was perfectly equal, it might be, perhaps, somewhat like an Irish halving of a thing—one half a little bigger than the other; perhaps also, the bigger one might not have fallen to the lady's share. Under the circumstances of the case, however, she might consider herself peculiarly fortunate in having any por-

tion at all: for a man of modern times, who thinks of the lady of his love, when he has anything else to think of, particularly so good a thing as salmon in season, gives a proof of the depth and intensity of his passion, equal to that which blowing out his brains would have been some forty years ago. Isabel, however, had been placed by her mother in precisely the position best calculated to ensure as much worship as was possible, to be, namely, just opposite the Viscount; so that whenever his eyes were off his plate, they naturally fell on his *vis-à-vis*. And, what we look at, Lady Anne knew, we think of; and indeed Lord Warringdon was obliging enough not only to think of Isabel, but to think of her all that Lady Anne was anxious he should think, viz., that "she was a very lovely girl, that she seemed to be very much inclined to fall in love with him, and that it was a great pity to give so much beauty and taste to such a stupid ugly fellow as M'Alpine." Said ugly fellow being at the moment whispering with his mouth full, sundry soft things to his fair, but listless neighbour, and, in the earnestness of his discourse, leaning across her plate, and staring full in her face, with his large white eyes, which he rolled about in the most approved style of *loverism*. Isabel would have pawned a joint of her pretty taper finger to have dared turn her back on him, or to slap his face; and in her struggles to conceal her disgust, for she knew that her mother's eye was fixed on her, she became silent and constrained. Now, any other man but M'Alpine would have been hereupon offended—he, on the contrary was charmed, for he interpreted the care with which she avoided his soft glances, or interrupted his compliments, as undeniable proofs of a tender and absorbing passion, which, from maidenly reserve, she laboured to conceal.

"Why did you not wait for the gentleman you speak of?" she asked, eagerly seizing on an observation just made, to turn his attention from her beauty and his own admiration.

"Because," answered he, "Mr. Barham was not quite ready to accompany me—and I could not wait; for," lowering his voice into a whisper, soft and tender as that of the boy-god himself, he added, "I was languishing for a *bame* (beam) from the sun of my soul, fair Isabel's bright eyes—for what is existence to *me* when absent from *her*, the source of light, and life, and hope!"

"But don't you think he may be offended?" inquired Isabel, not appearing to notice his twaddle.

"I explained to him that I had important avocations at M'Alpine Castle, which would prevent my having the pleasure of accompany-

ing him there. I have been expecting him these three days past, and am half surprised I did not meet him here, spell-bound by the facinations of the captivating enchantress of Wilmot Castle—the fair Isabel—that cruel but charming creature—whose gaze is death—who lures but to destroy."

A loud knocking at the hall-door interrupted Mr. M'Alpine's speech—and caused such a sensation, among the whole party, as would scarcely be credited, except by those who know by experience what can be effected by the most trifling occurrence which promises to break up the usual routine of a country-house life. While every one was wondering who it could be, and each sat with his or her knife or fork arrested, as if by a spell, in his or her hand; while all ears were eagerly bent to catch the glory due to first discoverers; and while all eyes were rivetted, as if they possessed the property of lynx vision, and would pierce the very walls; the door was softly opened, and Father John Molloy stole on tip-toe, into the room.

"Mercy on us! 'tis only you, father John!" exclaimed Maria. "I thought it was some prince in disguise, come to crave hospitality, and who, in return for a dinner and a bed, would fall in love with me—but never mind, sit down, father John—here by me, and tell us some news."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Maria, for a minute, I have something to say to your papa;" and so saying, he crept round the table to Mr. Wilmot, and made some observation in a low voice, to which the other replied:

"Certainly—beg of him by all means to walk in—why did you not bring him in at once, father John?"

"I was delicate of taking a liberty, Mr. Wilmot;" replied he, looking at Lady Anne, from whose mind he desired to efface, by his present respectful demeanour, the somewhat unfavourable impression made by his brother's conduct in the best room.

"I'll go myself," said Wilmot, starting up, he suddenly stopped short, however, and whispered to the priest, "you are sure he isn't one of those fellows with papers?"

"Ah, not at all, sir—he's a gentleman from England—an elegant fellow as ever I'd wish to see, and mighty agreeable."

"Who are you talking about?" inquired Maria, pricking up her ears at the words "gentleman from England—elegant fellow, &c."

Lady Anne's sense of hearing, equally acute as that of her daughter's was roused by the same gratifying sounds, and enquired, with pleased alacrity—

"What is the matter, my love? Is there any one coming, Mr Molloy?"

Both the persons addressed had, however, disappeared before her question reached their ears. Meantime, the party, with the exception of Lady Anne and Maria, proceeded in their agreeable occupations, and waited patiently until time should unravel the mystery, if mystery there were. But Miss Wilmot and her mother sat on thorns during the few seconds of Mr. Wilmot's absence; and their satisfaction may be imagined, but certainly not described, at seeing him return, accompained by a fair, and rather good-looking and gentleman-like young man.

"This gentleman," said Mr. Wilmot, ushering him in, "was found by Father John, upset by a drunken driver, about ten miles off—the man had quite lost his way—so Mr. Molloy very properly became his guide and conducted him here. Lady Anne, and her daughters, as well as myself, will do all in our power," he added, smiling, "to induce you to forgive our bad roads and worse drivers."

During the progress of this speech, bows and smiles on both sides had been exchanged, and the traveller had accepted the proffered seat near Maria.

"God bless me! can that be you, Mr. Barham?" exclaimed Mr. M'Alpine, "I had not the *laste* idea it was you—how d'ye do? I'm very glad to see you at last—Wilmot, this is the gentleman I told you that I had been expecting."

"Really—who could have thought it? is it possible? how very odd!" &c., &c., ran from mouth to mouth, as is usual on such occasions as the present.

"I am afraid you are very much fatigued;" observed Lady Anne, in the soft accents habitual to her when addressing the young of the other sex.

"Oh, no! I am much obliged to you, not in the least;" replied Mr. Barham, "quite delighted, I assure you—I think it capital fun, being overturned in a bog-hole—I like it of all things—'tis quite an adventure, you know, and so Irish, like what one sees in a play, you know—never would happen one in England, if one was travelling for ever."

"Then you have never been in Ireland before, I suppose?" observed Maria.

"Never; and I am so glad I've come!"

"You like it, then?"

"Oh, yes, of all things—never laughed so much in all my life as since I have been in Ireland. To-day, I thought I should have

died I laughed so, when I was thrown out of the carriage—it was capital! there was the driver in such a fright, you know, for fear I was killed, and when he found I wasn't a bit hurt, he got afraid I'd complain of him to his master; and began cursing his horses, and swearing 'twas their fault, and not his. Then he tried to get me up, and couldn't, he was so drunk. Then he fell over me, and neither of us could stir, I was laughing so, and he was so drunk. And there we should have lain all night, I suppose, only your friend, Mr. Molloy, was kind enough to bring me here."

"Very happy to have had the pleasure of seeing you," replied Maria, in her usual good-natured tone—"He seems a sad fool, poor young man," thought she. "I wonder is he rich?" Her thoughts upon this point were, in the course of the evening, most satisfactorily terminated by a scrap of a dialogue, she overheard between him and the Viscount.

"Pray, may I ask," said Lord Warringdon, "are you one of the Barhams of Leicestershire?"

"To be sure I am; Barham of Cralcourt, myself. You know the Cralcourt hounds?"

"Famous all over England," rejoined Lord Warringdon. "So, you are Barham of Cralcourt. Your father used to be greatly on the turf. Has he many horses running now?"

"No, I don't think he has," returned the other, laughing, "unless he has found some in Heaven—he has been dead these two years."

"Happy fellow," observed Lord Warringdon, "your own master—'the world before you where to choose,' like our first parents."

"Not my own master yet—I'm not to be of age for a year-and-a-half, you know; and I have got such a tiresome old fellow for a guardian; keeps me so tight, you can't think; Sir Willoughby Turner, of Mandeville Park; lives near Melton, you know; I can't bear him—he has got three such ugly daughters, you can't think."

Maria, who had edged her chair close to Mr. Barham's, on the discovery that he was a rich minor (the Cralcourt estate was worth eighteen thousand per annum), here joined the conversation.

"Do you mean," she asked, laughing, "that your guardian's having three ugly daughters is the original cause, or only an additional one, for not liking him? Poor man; you should pity, rather than dislike him for that."

"Well, so I do; I pity him very much, I'm sure; and them too, poor girls. For I'm sure they will never get married—unless Sir Willoughby gets people to marry 'em, the way he wanted me. But there was no reason I should, when I didn't like it, was there?"

"No, indeed," replied Maria, as frankly as if she was in no way concerned, in a question which touched ugly girls, who wanted to find husbands. But, indeed, never, on similar occasions, did she betray any thing like *esprit de corps ;* she could laugh as heartily at a jest against plain women, or husband-hunting ones, as if she were a beauty, and had refused half her male acquaintances. Who, then, could suspect the plain, but good-humoured, laughing Maria Wilmot, of being dangerous or designing ? Certainly not Mr. Barham of Cralcourt, whom, from this hour, she marked as her victim. Encouraged by her approbation of the exertion of free will he had evinced, with respect to marrying either of the Miss Turners, he proceeded with his confidential communications thus :

"So when I found he wanted me to marry Ellen Turner, whether I would or no—I cut and ran."

"You were quite right," observed Maria, "I like to see young men have proper spirit."

"I told him, you know, I was going to Paris, and he began to give me such a lot of advice about *rouge et noir*, and to keep out of mischief, and all that sort of thing ; so I promised I would He asked me how long I should stay, and I said about three months ; so I should not be in the least surprised if they were all by this in Paris, after me ; and wondering why they can't find me."

"So you did not go to Paris, after all ?"

"Lord bless you, no ! I guessed they would be after me, so I came here ; they will be so surprised when they hear I'm in Ireland. Don't you think they will ?"

"Capital !" exclaimed Maria, laughing, (she could laugh, as other women cry or faint, whenever she chose)—"Capital ; I give you credit for that idea."

"But the best of it is, they can't hear a word of it, for a long while, for nobody knows where I am gone, I kept it such a secret ! I did not even bring a servant with me, for fear he might tell—just for a lark, you know. I was determined to have some fun by myself at last—wasn't I right ?"

Maria here burst into one of her best fits of laughing, partly natural, partly affected, to please Mr. Barham's un-aristocratic laughter-loving propensities.

"What are you laughing at ? do tell me, Miss Wilmot," laughing already himself from sympathy.

"Why, I was thinking, Mr. Barham, that your friends will be sure to look for you every day at the *Morgue !*"

"The *Morgue !*" repeated he, nearly screaming with delight—

"Oh! so they will, I'm positive!—I never thought of that—how good! Oh! what capital fun!"—and he almost fell off the chair in a convulsion of glee, at Maria's happy idea. "Oh, Miss Wilmot, you will kill me," continued he, when sufficiently recovered from his transport to articulate intelligibly—"Hang me, if I have done any thing but laugh, laugh, ever since I arrived in Ireland! I never saw such a place for fun in my life. I wonder Irish people ever leave Ireland; they never can laugh half so much any where else. I should like so to be an Irishman! Oh! Miss Wilmot, Mr. Molly told me such a droll story, coming along, about somebody playing him a trick at a funeral; I don't exactly recollect what it was, though. I wish you would ask him to tell it over again, will you? I should be so much obliged to you."

Maria was very well disposed to call in the assistance of so faithful an ally as Father John, to aid her virtuous exertions in the task of entertaining their new guest.

"Father John, I want you. Here's a petitioner for one of your good stories."

"What good story, Miss Maria?" enquired Father John, quite surprised to find that he was considered a teller of good stories.

"Oh! the one about the funeral, Mr. Molly, if you please," said Mr. Barham.

"The one about the funeral," repeated Father John, slowly and musingly; "upon my word and credit, Mr. Barham, it fails me to remember what story you mane about a funeral. Can't you recollect some of the particulars?"

"Somebody you thought was dying, and who was not."

"Oh! I remember now—Dan Murphy—But that's no story at all, Mr. Barham, but the blessed truth, I'm sorry to say. Not but that I laugh sometimes myself, when I think how I was done out of my corpse;" and the good-humoured priest again laughed heartily at the recollection.

"Oh, it is all so good, Mr. Molly; pray tell it again, will you?"

Lord Warringdon here joined the group, and added his solicitations to those of Mr. Barham, for the "funny corpse-story," though not, by many degrees, so great an *amateur* of fun as his Leicestershire compatriot. Lord Warringdon had sufficiently benefited by Irish air to be able to listen, with tolerable satisfaction, to an Irish anecdote. Besides, he was canvassing the county, and, of course, the priests.

"Pray, my dear sir, oblige us," he said.

"With all the pleasure in life, my Lord. Most happy to con-

tribute to your entertainment, gentlemen. But, upon my word, I'm afraid you'll be mighty disappointed, if you expect any great amusement, for 'tis nothing but just what happened to myself and Father Costelloe: that's my superior in the parish, the parish priest, you know."

"I thought," interrupted Mr. Barham, "you were the parish priest, yourself."

"I wish to the Lord I was," rejoined Mr. Molloy. "No, God help me! I'm only the coadjutor,—the curate, you know," observing that his English auditors did not understand the term. "Well, myself, and Father Costelloe, and Mrs. Priest,—that's the priest's niece-in-law, married to one Costelloe, that keeps a public-house hard by Father Costelloe's,—we call her Mrs. Priest because there are so many Costelloes in the place, we'd never know which was which, if we did not call her by some name that wasn't her own;—well, they and I were talking of one thing or other, one night, over our punch, when, all of a sudden, there comes the sorrows of a sassarara at the door. 'The Lord save us,' says I; 'who have we got here?' 'Who has the assurance and impertinence to come to my door at this unseasonable hour of the night?' cries Father Costelloe, speaking in his fine English manner. (Take care, God bless you, Miss Maria, and don't tell him I say so.) 'For one farthing,' says he, 'I'd *keen* the fellow,' (cane, he meant) 'whoever he is, for his impudence.' I forgot to say it was Shrove-Tuesday, of all the days in the year. How do you know, Mr. Costelloe?' says I; 'how do you know,' says I, 'but it might be a crature coming to get married, smart out of hand, afore lent?' 'Mr. Molloy,' says he, drawing himself up the way he does when he wants to be mighty grand intirely (you know, Miss Maria;) 'I would not choose, for the best wedding in my parish, nor the best funeral either, to be disturbed at my repasts.' 'How comical you are,' thinks I: 'any way, it wouldn't be you that would get the ra'al disturbance, God help me!' There isn't a man in the parish, gentlemen," said he, turning to his auditors, "that earns his meals harder than myself. Rain, snow, or hail, at cock-crow, or pitch dark, away I am, tramping the bogs and mountains, while other people, that gets the two shares and more of the dues, are lying snug in their beds, or sitting over their warm fire and comfortable tumbler. But, what can't be cured must be endured,—no use fretting. Grief killed the cat, we're told, so, I'll finish my story. 'May be, says I, it might be a crature that isn't *expected*.'"

"Somebody dying," Maria explained to the gentlemen, "not *expected to live.*"

"'Do you think,' says he, 'I would suffer myself to be disturbed, at this hour, by the best corpse in my parish?' Well, in the middle of this, in walks Mrs. Priest: I forgot to say, she had slipped out of the room, half an hour before, but I never perceived it—'Guess the news, gentlemen,' says she, seeming mighty plased. 'My grandmother!' says I. 'No, ra'al good news,' says she; 'Dan Murphy won't pass the night.' 'Don't bother us,' says I; 'sure he's always dying. God forgive me for cursing,' says I. 'Well, he's dying now in ra'al earnest.' 'How do you know?' says I. 'Wasn't his son here, a minute ago, tearing the house down, like mad?' 'And where is he now?' says I; 'till I spake to him.'—'You can't spake to him now,' says she, 'for he's gone up to the castle, to spake to Pat Murphy, his cousin, to tell him all about it, that he may be ready to attend the funeral, and bring what's wanting, you know;' looking mighty knowing at me. 'Arrah! no: it's joking, you are, Mrs. Priest,' says I; for she's always at her thricks and schames, making fools of Father Costelloe and myself, telling us this one is going to be married, and that one expected, so I'm always on my guard with her. But this turn she spoke so sarious, and looked so pleased, I was thricked entirely, and made sure poor Dan was dying in earnest at last. God knows 'twas time for him, if ever he intended it. But his equal for toughness I never saw. He has had Mrs. Finn, Mrs. Wilson, and the doctor at the dispensary at him, for these five years back, and even they couldn't send him off. Not an Easther came, but we expected our Easther dinner of him,—for his funeral would be the finest in the parish, there's such a deal of Murphys in it, and so well off as they are! the snuggest men to be seen in the province. But what made me give in to the joke, entirely, was the hurry Father Costelloe was in to get me off,—he wouldn't give me time to finish my tumbler, or chat a bit with Mrs. Priest.

"Well, it was pitch dark,—raining cats and dogs, and the wind blowing so, you'd think 'twas ould Nick cooling his tay. Such a night I never saw for hardship and contrariness,—my horse and myself coming down every minute. Father Costelloe broke the crature's knees the last time he dined here; and 'tisn't the first horse he served so. No wonder, poor man, he grows so corpulent! Well, at last, I come to my journey's end. When I got to the poor man's door, I put on a mighty grave face,—you'd think my life was

bound up in poor Pat Murphy's. Not but I was sorry for the creature, now that I thought he was dying in earnest, and that all would be soon over with him.

"I fastened my horse to the latch of the door: 'God save all here,' says I. '*Cead mille faltha*,' said Kutty, Dan's wife, smiling, and looking mighty pleased. 'Them women,' thinks I to myself, 'are the dickens, sure enough! see, now, how well pleased Kutty is, and her husband, who was always a good one to her, going from her, the creature!—Is he sensible, Kutty?' says I. 'Sensible! Father John? to be sure he is; why wouldn't he? he's not bad enough for that, yet.' 'Ah, then, how much worse would you have him, Kutty?' says I, 'if you wouldn't have him dead entirely.—Can he spake, Kutty?' says I. 'Ah, then, why wouldn't he spake, Father John?' says she. Myself couldn't make head or tail of her, 'so,' says I, 'bring me to him, Kutty,' says I, 'and then I'll see myself how he is.' 'God bless your reverence, 'tis you that are fond of him, sure enough,' says she, 'to come all the ways this blessed night to see him; I'll sind for him, Father John,' says she. 'Send for him!' says I, 'what in the world do you mane, woman?' says I. 'I'll send for him to Derrymanagoslogh, I mane, Father John,' says she. 'It's a wonder he wouldn't rather die in his own house,' says I. 'So he would, if it was dying he was,' says she. 'Why, what else is he doing, then?' says I. 'Smoking and drinking, like the rest of the company, I b'lieve,' says she. 'What company are you talking of at all, woman?' says I. 'Ah, sure, he's gone to the lower parish, beyant, to a dragging home of a daughther of a first cousin of his sisther's husband, that's married to a dacent boy, a cousin of his own.' 'Murder alive!' says I to myself, 'and all the slavery I got driving like mad through the bogs, and my elegant tumbler of punch left cooling!' Well, I thought it did no good to be cross to poor Kutty, because her husband wasn't dying just to convenience me and Father Costelloe; so I put the best face I could upon the matter, and so I said I was mighty happy to find Dan was so much better, and off I set home."

"Oh! just tell me, before you go any further, what you mean by a dragging home," interrupted Mr. Barham.

"A dragging home, you know, is the same as a hauling home," returned Father John.

"Yes, but I don't know what that means either," replied the young Englishman.

"Well, then, I'll tell you what it meanes:—a dragging home, or hauling home, is when a girl of one parish is married to a boy of

another, and that 'tis too far for the young man's people to come to the wedding. When she comes home to her husband's friends, they have another wedding, equal to the first, and that's what they call a dragging home."

"Thank you, for your explanation," said Lord Warringdon, "and now let us hear the sequel of your amusing adventure."

"You're extremely polite, my Lord. But, indeed, I'm afraid I'm tiring you, and the rest of the company, with such a long rigmarole, about nothing at all."

"Oh, no," exclaimed Mr. Barham, eagerly; "I'm sure every body must like to hear it, 'tis so funny, isn't it, Miss Wilmot? Now, wouldn't you all like to hear the rest of it?" appealing to the company at large.

Mr. M'Alpine replied to the question by a look of the most ineffable contempt. He deemed laughing one of the seven deadly sins against Romanus and gentility, his two favourite divinities: and, as he never felt inclined to indulge in it himself, affirmed that no one who had either head or heart ever did.

"What a soulless creature that Barham must be to laugh as he does; don't you think so, my fair enchantress," said he, still staring and looking tender at his victim, poor Isabel.

"It is very happy for him to be able to laugh," she answered, half crying from vexation.

"Come, come,—the story, the story—you like it, don't you, Lady Anne?" cried Barham.

Lady Anne, from politeness, and Mr. Wilmot, from good-nature, always seemed to enjoy what amused others; they had, therefore, listened as attentively to Father John's adventure as if they had not heard it a dozen times before; and now placidly awaited its conclusion.

Father John proceeded thus:—"All the way coming back, I was thinking how I'd be even with Mrs. Priest for the trick she played me. The next morning, before I got up, a message came from her to me, begging me to come and have a *collation* after mass, with herself and Father Costelloe. She always gets share of his breakfast, for she'd go to the dickens for tay; God forgive her, poor woman! I guessed well enough the rason of her civility—'twas just to see how crest-fallen I'd look, after my fine jaunt for nothing. But I nicked her, as you'll see. 'How are you, Father John?' says she.—'Very well, thank you, ma'am,' says I. 'How did you lave poor Dan,' says she, putting a comical face on herself. 'I didn't see him at all,' says I. 'How's that?' says she. 'Because I

wouldn't be let,' says I. 'How do you mane you wouldn't be let?' says she. 'Only just because Mrs. Wilson and the ministher were within-side, reading to him, out of a thract,' says I. 'Reading to him out of a thract, says she; 'Lord save us from all harm!' making the sign of the cross. 'Reading to him! out of a thract!' cried Father Costelloe, who just then come down stairs from his devotions. 'The apostate! he deserves to be cursed from the altar!'—his face was all manner of colours, and swelled up the bigness of his body a'most. 'Och, then,' says I, 'you may keep your breath to cool your porridge, Mr. Costelloe; for if you were cursing him from Sunday morning till Saturday night, he wouldn't care a pinch of snuff about yourself or your curses.' 'The bastely turncoat,' said Mrs. Priest, pouring out a cup of elegant strong tay for herself. 'Not care about me nor my curses!' cries Father Costelloe, mighty displeased. 'I request, sir, you'll speak more respectfully when you address your superior.' 'How will ye have me spake respectful, when I'm spaking the way Protestants spake?' 'You were speaking of one of my flock, sir; you don't call them Protestants, I suppose,' says he, as mad as could be. 'Not all of 'em—only Dan Murphy; he's as black a new light as Mrs. Wilson, or the ministher himself, by this time,' says I. 'I don't believe any such thing,' says he. 'Oh, very well, Mr. Costelloe, you needn't if you don't like.' So I said no more, but sat down to my collation. I was mighty fatigued after my duties that morning; but Father Costelloe was too mad to eat a bit. 'Pray, what rasons did the turncoat give for his apostacy?' 'I wasn't let see him at all,' says I; but his wife tould me he turned partly because he liked the Protestants, and partly to spite us.' 'Spite *us!* What does that mean? He must mean to spite you, Mr. Molloy—You've been negligent of your duty, sir.' 'Faith I haven't, Mr. Costelloe; and 'tisn't me he means, but yourself, that's to say, Mrs. Priest.' 'Me!' says she, trembling, and turning as white as a sheet, for she's greatly in dread of displeasing Father Costelloe, and no blame to her; 'What have I to do with a villain of his kind turning Protestant?' 'I don't know,' said I, 'whether he tells truth or no, but the reason he gives is that you refused a son of his liquor, on score; and himself and his son swore, by this and that, they'd be revenged on you and Father Costelloe, and cheat you out of his funeral.' 'You unfortunate woman!' said Father Costelloe, looking at her as if he would eat her up alive—and she shaking like a leaf. 'Oh! Father Costelloe, dear,' says she, 'forgive me this once. 'Oh! for the sake of ——' 'Go this minute and ask Dan Murphy's pardon,

and his son's, and tell 'em they're welcome to every dhrop of liquor in your house, whether they pay for it or not.' If you seen the wry face she made, for she's the greatest skinflint, and the proudest and most conceited woman in the parish, in regard of being married to the priest's nephew. 'Why don't you go at once?' says Father Costelloe. 'I'm waiting, sir,' says she, mighty mild, 'just to finish my drop of tay.' 'Your tay, woman,' says he, bouncing off his chair as if he was shot; 'if you don't go this minute, bit or sup, tay, nor mate, shall you ever have in my house. What's a drop of ditch-water of its kind, compared to my losing the best funeral in the parish, to say nothing of the poor man's soul, and all by your own fault?' So, away she went, laving her tay after her, and starving with the hunger, all the way to Dan Murphy's, on a pillion; and had to hire a man to sit before her, which vexed her well, I promise you. Nothing could equal the surprise of the Murphys when she began *pullalooing*, and crying *peccavi* for not giving them tick, and offering them every thing in her house for nothing. But when she began talking of Mrs. Wilson and the ministher, they thought her going mad entirely; and when the murder came out, at last, back she came to us, fit to be tied, mad, outrageous. 'What made you,' says she, 'have the assurance to make a fool of me, Misthress Priest?' 'One good turn deserves another.' 'I'll tell Father Costelloe of you,' says she. '*I'll* tell Father Costelloe of *you*,' says I. So there then it ended; and there ends my story—gentlemen and ladies, and I'm much indebted to you for your pleasing attention."

"It is rather we who are indebted to you, sir," politely observed Lord Warringdon, "I assure you I have been much amused."

"Raally," observed M'Alpine, to Isabel, "he ought to be ashamed to say so. A man of Lord Warringdon's habits and education should be suparior to finding amusement in the conversation of a man of no mind; he can have no mind himself."

"I beg your pardon, you happen to be mistaken, twice in a breath;" replied Isabel, sharply. "Father John has a strong brogue; but he has mind too. And as to Lord Warringdon, he has taste, as well as mind."

"Oh, I believe I must allow him to have taste; for on one point, at laste, we agree—that of admiring the same lady—But now, with respect to the other qualification. A great dale depends upon what would be our different definitions of a man of mind. What would you define a man of mind to be?"

"Oh, I'm a bad hand at definitions:" answered Isabel, carelessly.

"What a libel on your own intellectual powers!" cried Mr. M'Alpine, "you that shine aqually in the flowery fields of the imagination, or the sublime heights of the understanding. Come, now; you must not be afraid of me; and you must have a little more confidence in yourself:" he continued, tenderly encouraging her supposed timidity—"Come, fair Isabel, I'm waiting for your definition."

"A definition of what?" enquired Lord Warringdon, who, for the first time that evening, found an opportunity of seating himself near Isabel. He had more than once previously endeavoured to make his way to her, but had been constantly interrupted *en route* by Lady Anne, who always contrived, just on those occasions, to have something particular to say to him; he could not imagine how it all happened.

Are our readers more sagacious than his Lordship? But, accustomed as he was, in all things, great or small, to have his own way; opposition, however unintentional, or accidental, irritated his impatience, and confirmed into determinate will what had originally been, perhaps, but a caprice. Each time, therefore, that lady Anne (even though but accidentally as he supposed) had intercepted him, he grew but still more resolved to accomplish his aim of the moment; in the meanwhile, he glanced at Isabel the oftener, because he could not at once make up to her; and thus noticed in her something of interest, which otherwise must have escaped him. He remarked her listless, pre-occupied air; he saw that she never voluntarily addressed her companion, and that when obliged, from politeness to reply to his observations, her eyes were directed to the floor, or to the ceiling, or to Father John, or to Mr. Barham; to any, or every point, nay, flittingly to himself, in fact, rather than to the face of the person who was addressing her. And now the Viscount's curiosity became augmented anew, and he watched her attentively.

It was evident that Isabel desired to be free of her companion; she did not, however, pout or toss her head, in manifestation of her feelings; an occasional contraction of her expressive brow alone betrayed her impatience of the constraint imposed upon her; indicating even vexation, only just so far as became one whose mind was as polished as her manners. For the first time Lord Warringdon looked with interest upon an unmarried woman, who was not an heiress. He had seen Isabel much more brilliant in beauty than upon that evening; but he had never *felt* her to be so loveable; even those who have no feeling themselves are touched by an un-

conscious, delicate show of it in others, particularly when, as in the present case, the abstract quality is illustrated by a pretty face. No; never had he thought her eye-lashes so long and so dark as now, when he saw them almost reflected on a transparent cheek, pale from suppressed emotion. Nor had her light brown hair, which fell in rich natural clusters about her face and neck, ever appeared to him so luxuriant and beautiful as at present, when it shaded a countenance no longer lighted up by vivacity, and, (the better part of beauty,) the expression of a quick succession of thought—but breathing a gentle and unobtrusive pensiveness.

"What a pity," thought he, "to throw away so graceful a creature upon that brute!"

The look of delighted surprise with which Isabel started from her dull inertion, at the sound of his voice, when he came up, and asked, as had been mentioned—"A definition of what?" and the radiant smile with which she welcomed him, were not lost upon so acute an observer of female nature as Lord Warringdon.

"Her cheek is not pale now," thought he, "nor does she turn away her eyes when she looks at *me*. Her look is, indeed, timid, but not avoiding."

Isabel felt that the words of his question were nothing—but its tone much. Isabel felt this, and her face beamed with joy and intelligence.

"The statue of Pygmalion," thought he complacently, "warmed into life."

But Isabel answered his question with vivacity. "Mr. M'Alpine insists on my defining a man of mind; the idea of asking a woman for a definition! to require us to imprison our vague, fleeting, impalpable, and often, as men say, irrational impressions, and imaginings within the limit of a cold, precise, philosophical rule. I appeal to you, now,is it not unfair?"

"Mr. M'Alpine, don't let her off," said Lord Warringdon, "a definition from her would be *impayable*—there would be such sweet—"

"Confusion! you were going to say," interrupted Isabel, laughing—"so let me save you from finishing a sentence so courageously begun."

"No!" said he, "such sweet freshness and feeling, and—

"Nonsense!"—again interrupted Isabel. "But it is quite true. You must never expect anything precise, or raisonné, in our ideas. We are nothing but 'a bundle of sympathies,' you know, creatures who never think according to reason, but according to feeling. In one word, women think with their hearts."

"They could not think with anything half so good," rejoined Lord Warringdon—"*allons, commencez.*"

Isabel laughed again, and shook her head. Mr. M'Alpine was inexpressibly gratified at the change that had taken place in her manner, since Lord Warringdon had interrupted their *tête-à-tête.*

"She feels more at ase now, that she's no longer alone with me. How soon one can see when a woman raaly loves—the very manes she takes to conceal her passion betrays it—Come now," said he, in a tone half-tender, half-playful—"come, I insist on your definition. I'll not take the laste excuse."

Just at this moment, very much to Mr. M'Alpine's annoyance, Maria joined the group—she had committed Mr. Barham to the safe guardianship of Father John, her zealous ally on all occasions, and her indefatigable *proneur ;* being, therefore, relieved for a season, at least, from such close application of her own interests, she was willing to dispose of a few moments' lesiure to her sister's advantage.

"I wish," thought she, "that M'Alpine would take himself off, and leave Warringdon and Isabel together." And, aware of M'Alpine's refined antipathy to the love of jesting, and ridicule of sentiment, she judged that her own presence would most effectually secure his departure.

"Well, good people," said she, "what high and weighty matters are you discussing here? Isabel, I see, is picking her glove to pieces, so I conclude she's the umpire chosen to decide on the contending opinions of Great Britain and Ireland. Now, my advice to you is, to say out at once, boldly, yes, or no, whatever may be the point at issue. Better to offend either or both, (your pardon, gentlemen,) than spoil a pair of gloves."

"Your tariff of our worth is certainly highly flattering;" observed Lord Warringdon, smiling.

Oh! I don't profess to be polite:" replied Maria, "you must know I'm odd, and odd people are never expected to be civil. You can't think what a comfort that is. But, come! what's the subject of your contestation? let us see if I can't settle it, as fairly and more fearlessly than Isabel. Love, politics, religion, or literature? Under which of these four grand divisions of squabbling have you ranged yourselves for battle, heroes of white Albion and green Erin?"

"Our conversation has nothing to do with any of the topics you have enumerated; neither was it a dispute, but a discussion;" observed M'Alpine, annoyed at Maria's jesting manner of treating

all his favourite subjects." Your sister is going to oblige me (if you'll allow her to speak,) with her idaas of a man of mind."

"Well, Isabel—proceed, I entreat—I'm all attention;" said Maria, assuming an attitude of mock-gravity, which enraged M'Alpine, but made Lord Warringdon laugh. "Come, Isabel," she ran on, perceiving that her sister still remained silent, "enlighten us with your wisdom."

"Nonsense, Maria," said Isabel; "I have already told these gentlemen that I never could define anything; and I'm quite tired of having to repeat the same thing so often."

"So you won't oblige me?" murmured Mr. M'Alpine, in at one of tender reproach.

"I did not think," observed Lord Warringdon, "you were so unpersuadable."

"What stupid creatures men are," resumed Maria; "you never can guess a woman's real motive for doing or not doing, any one given thing. Here's my poor, guileless, innocent sister, accused of disobligingness by one gentleman, and of unpersuadableness by another. Two most cruel and undeserved charges; for she is dying to oblige the one, and could be persuaded to anything by the other; while the motive for her silence is simply this. She fears that her description of what she imagines to be an interesting man may not sufficiently appear a fancy portrait; and that, therefore, one or the other of you may think he discerns his own features in the *beau ideal* sketch of her imagination."

"I do wish," said Isabel, blushing very deeply and looking extremely offended; "I do wish, Maria, you would not speak as you do, without thinking. Mr. M'Alpine, of course, knows you are only jesting; but Lord Warringdon will really think that"—she stopped abruptly, aware how ill-judged was any comment on Maria's speech, and how much consciousness of its truth her very anxiety betrayed. Maria, who never talked at random, had contemplated this very result; and, having attained it, and attracted Lord Warringdon's attention, she now stepped in to her sister's aid.

"Mr. M'Alpine, since Isabel will not oblige you, I will. Now, I define a man of mind to be the man who has a mind for me. And that's what I call a jewel of a definition;" she went on, mimicking Father John's intonations.

Isabel and Lord Warringdon laughed, but Mr. M'Alpine looked at her with ineffable disgust, as he muttered to himself—

"The idea of any woman confessing such feminine degradation and want of sentiment! She's an abominable creature."

But, though Maria's jest upon so sacred a subject had displeased Mr. M'Alpine, it delighted Mr. Barham; who, on hearing the laugh, came flying across the room to enquire its cause.

"Oh—bravo! oh! how well you do mimic Mr. Molly! 'tis so like;" and he sprang about the room in delight.

"What's that you're all laughing at?" enquired Father John.

"Oh! something so droll, but I can't tell *you* what, because you might be cross."

"Not he!" cried Maria; "Father John is never cross at anything *I* say or do. Are you, Father John?"

"Ah, you rogue, I guess well what you're doing; telling some diverting lie of me. But you're welcome," added he, looking kindly at his favourite; you're welcome, whatever you say."

"He's very near it, isn't he, Miss Wilmot?" asked Mr. Barham: "I'll tell him, shall I? yes I will. Miss Wilmot was giving an imitation of you, Mr. Molly; so like, you'd have died yourself to hear her!" and he ran to join the priest.

"I wouldn't doubt her," replied the good-humoured Father John. 'Tisn't the first time she done it, I'll engage; no, nor it won't be the last time either."

"Did you you hear what she said about the man of mind, Mr. Molly?"

"A man of what mind?" enquired Father John.

"Oh, not a man of any particular mind—only a man of mind in general, you know."

"Faith, I do not know," said Father John.

Maria, perceiving one gentleman could not understand, nor the other explain, took upon herself the office of interpreter. When she had done—

"Ha! ha! ha! upon my word, that's an excellent idea of a man of mind:" praised Father John, shaking his plump sides.—"I'll tell you one thing, Miss Maria,—whoever has a mind for you, will shew he has sense, at any rate, to choose the pleasantest crature from this to yourself, whoever the others may be. That's what I call a fine, hearty, sinsible young woman" he continued, turning to Mr. Barham—"one that says out at once whatever comes into her head, without throubling herself what any body thinks of her; and that's the girl for my money! And a pleasant crature; always saying one droll thing or other, enough to make a corpse laugh."

"Well, do you know, I thought she was very droll, though I never heard any one say she was reckoned so—I begin to understand Irish humour, I think, though I havn't been long here, yet. But is she as droll as you are, Mr. Molly?"

"Droll as me, is it? Troth she is, and far droller than ever I will be."

"But has she such nice stories as that about the funeral, Mr. Molly? I wish you'd mention what stories she does tell—will you?"

"I don't remember, upon my word, exactly, at the present moment, any story of her's in particular; but, indeed, I nearly lost my life by a joke of hers once."

"Oh, did you?" exclaimed Mr. Barham, in ecstasy;—"do tell me how?"

"Iwas eating a potato, hot out of the pot, one day, below in the kitchen, and she came in, I forget for what, now; and began telling me some quare thing or other, and I began to laugh. Troth, the potato stuck in my throat, and I had like to be choked; and would never have eaten a bit again, I'm sure, only she thumped me between the shoulders, and forced the potato out of me."

"Oh, how funny!" cried Mr. Barham—"how I wish I had been there!—I should have so liked to have seen you choking, Mr. Molly."

"I never seen the equal of him for idiotsy; he can't even call my own name right," muttered Father John. "Troth, and it 'twould be the same to you, I'd rather you saw some one else choking."

"Oh! I don't mean, you know, that I should like you to be choked, in earnest. Only it must have looked so funny to see you all black in the face, and Miss Wilmot slapping your back! What was it she told you that made you laugh so?"

"I forget, indeed, what it was! 'tis a good while ago, now."

"Well! a story of your own, then, Mr. Molly! Do, pray, tell me something funny."

"I haven't a funny story in the world, Mr. Barham, that I havn't told you already."

Poor Mr. Barham looked exceedingly disappointed.

"Well, the same over again!—Will you, Mr. Molly, if you please?"

"Ah! my God! was there ever any poor man so persecuted as I am, and all on account of the bad luck I had to tell him the thrick I played on Mrs. Priest! One would think I had nothing to do, from morning to night, but remembering funny stories to divert him. I wish I was in bed out of his way. Miss Maria, my honey," cried he, "I want to speak to you a moment—whisper. This young man is killing me; I can't stand him any longer, my pet."

"Why, what is he doing, Father John?"

"Bothering me to death for funny stories, as he calls them."

"Well, can't you tell him some?"

"What else have I been doing all night? But, any how, I can't stop now, for I have to read my office before I go to bed, you know; and it's getting late; so God bless you." And Father John stole quietly out of the room, to the great discomfiture of Mr. Barham: Maria, the only person of the party who could supply the place of Father John, being engaged talking with Mr. M'Alpine, Lord Warringdon, and her sister.—Aware, in fact, of M'Alpine's horror of any thing savouring of a jest on any subject, but more especially on one of a poetical kind, she had sent back Mr. Barham to Father John's charge, on a quest for "funny stories," and indulged herself in allusions to them, purely for the purpose of scaring away Mr. M'Alpine, and leaving Lord Warringdon and her sister *tête-à-tête*. But this was the more difficult to accomplish, as Mr. M'Apline had never been so pleasingly impressed with the "idāa of Isabel's attachment," as upon that evening.—"Her constrained and timid manner when alone with me—her gaiety and animation when Warringdon joined us—her charming reluctance to define a man of mind, for fear I should penetrate her secret, and who it was that rāalized her romantic idāa of perfection; and then, her sweet agitation at her sister's indelicate allusion to the rāal motive for her refusing to oblige me;—every thing conspires to give me the delightful assurance that I am fondly, tenderly, and devotedly beloved by this fascinating crature."—Such was the tenor of Mr. M'Alpine's cogitation, as he arose to effect his escape from the coarseness and vulgarity of Maria's conversation.

"I am going to lave you for a moment," he said to Isabel; and, accompanying this announcement, at once afflicting and consolatory, (inasmuch as the intimation of his departure was softened by the assurance of his speedy return,) by a look of mingled triumph and tenderness, at the one sister, and of unmingled and unmeasured abhorrence at the other—he dragged his lazy length across the room, and seated himself near Lady Anne, who welcomed him with one of her most seducing smiles, in which Mr. M'Alpine read delight at his attention to her daughter, and a strong, though vain, effort to conceal that delight. Isabel and Lord Warringdon also caught this expression of Lady Anne's countenance, and discerned another feeling mingled with it;—namely, displeasure towards Lord Warringdon, for having, by his *gaucherie*, interrupted the more than probable termination of Mr. M'Alpine's assiduities, that evening; and also

against her daughter, for having preferred a flirtation with one gentleman, to a declaration from the other. And now, for the first time in his life, Lord Warringdon beheld a mother angry, and a daughter frightened, at his assiduities;—for Isabel grew pale and constrained as she had previously done, when talking with, or rather when talked to, by Mr. M'Alpine, although the Viscount felt that the same cause did not now produce the similar effect. The conversation, hitherto so flowing and animated, became broken and spiritless.

"Your Father and I," he observed, after a pause of some seconds, "are going to ride-morrow to a Mr. Molony's, who has votes—Will you come?"

"Maria will, I dare say."

"That is truly an Irish answer," he said, laughing. "I did not ask whether Maria would, but whether *you* would—No diplomatic subterfuges will avail you with me, however. I demand an honest answer;—Yes—or No"

"No"—replied Isabel, laughing—but Lord Warringdon perceived that her laugh was affected, and also divined that, although she said the No, so courageously, her heart sank because she dared not say—Yes.

"I thought you liked riding?" looking disappointed at her refusal.

"So I do," said she, trying to seem perfectly indifferent.

"It must be, then, that you don't like your proposed companions; which of them is the obnoxious person? Mr. Wilmot or myself?"

A slight tremor of her voice did not escape him, as she answered with affected carelessness,—"Neither one nor the other; my only motive for declining your invitation is, that it will not be in my power to accept it."

"So you won't come and *help* me, as you have done heretofore, to win the hearts of the men of ———? But I am quite in the black-book, I see; you'll neither speak to me, nor look at me, ever since the arrival of your mamma's friend, the adoring, adorable, and doubtless, adored, Mr. M'Alpine."

Isabel darted a look of indignant surprise at him, and, rising abruptly, left the room. In her look he read something more than astonishment, or even displeasure, something that expressed, as distinctly as if she had give utterance to the feeling—"You are ungenerous in saying this; for you not only know perfectly well that I abominate M'Alpine, but you also are aware that I like yourself."

Lord Warringdon dreamt that night that he was in love with Isabel Wilmot, and when he awoke, he did not laugh at his dream.

"If she had a hundred or even fifty thousand pounds," thought he. *If* is a great peace-maker in love as well as war.—When a man or woman comes to an if, there are hopes or fears, as the case may be, that all is not sound "in the state of Denmark."

CHAPTER VIII.

After breakfast, next morning, Mr. Barham set off grouse-shooting, escorted by Pat Murphy; and Mr. M'Alpine remained at home to talk sentiment and read Lord Byron to Isabel; Mr. Wilmot and Lord Warringdon were just mounting their horses on their canvassing expedition; and Isabel was standing at the window, ostensibly to admire her father's Arab, which was prancing and curvetting with all the vanity of conscious beauty, never suspecting that part, at least, of the admiration he excited was owing to the chance of his having that day for his rider his master's guest rather than his master himself.

Lord Warringdon looked up at the window, and smiled when he saw Isabel, "Wish me success," cried he, as he kissed his hand, and rode off.

"Come away from the window, my dear!" said Lady Anne, "Lord Warringdon can mount his horse, I suppose, without your superintendence. I must say, I never saw such conduct in any young woman, circumstanced as you are;—engaged, I may say, to one man, and yet carrying on a flirtation with another. I really have not patience with such want of sense, and want of honour. I have not the slightest doubt that M'Alpine would have proposed for you last night, had you behaved with common decency. But just as he was making up his mind to speak, you set on foot a trashy conversation with Lord Warringdon, who has no more serious intentions about you than he has about me; he is just laughing at you,—*that* you may rely upon. Maria," said she, turning to her other daughter. "I shall be obliged by your talking to your sister on this business; perhaps you may have more influence on her than I have." And so saying, she quitted the room with an air of displeasure.

"I am a miserable creatnre!" exclaimed Isabel.

"Because mamma won't let you look out of the window at Lord Warringdon?" asked her sister, laughing.

Isabel coloured. "I care very little about Lord Warringdon, as it happens," said she, in a tone of disdain. "It is not necessary, I suppose, to be in love with him, in order to be miserable at the thought of being forced to marry M'Alpine. Maria, if you knew how I loathe this horrid M'Alpine, I am sure you would pity me—even mamma would. I will tell her that I really cannot marry him, shall I, Maria?"

"Why, as for that, I don't see what use there would be in any such avowal. You know she made poor Louisa marry a man old enough to be her grandfather; and that all Louisa's protestations of disgust were nothing in the balance against fifty thousand per annum, and a peerage. The grand object of mamma's life has been, you know, to marry her daughters advantageously. We may break our hearts (such of us as have them) afterwards, if we like,—that will not be her fault, but ours; she does her duty, she gets us good matches, and leaves all the rest, like a good Christian, to Providence. It would be, therefore, quite useless to tell her that you dislike M'Alpine; she knows, already, that you do. To avoid marrying him, you must marry somebody else; that is your only chance of escape."

"Heaven help me! I have none, then," exclaimed Isabel, despairingly.

"Yes, you have;" replied Maria, who feared driving her sister to utter desparation. "Yes, you have a chance, and a brilliant one. I am sure Lord Warringdon admires you: whether he is sufficiently *épris* to marry you is another story:—try what you can effect with him. But take care that mamma shall see nothing of your proceedings, or she would stop you at once; for she fears losing M'Alpine, and not succeeding with Warringdon. Besides, to tell you the truth, she has taken it into her head, that the admiration is rather on your side than his, and that you may make yourself ridiculous, and——"

"I am really much indebted to her, for her flattering estimation of me," interruped Isabel, highly affronted; "I am not quite mean enough to fall in love with a man who cares nothing about me: nor silly enough to fancy he does, if he really does not.—Maria, too, sees that he admires me," thought she to herself; "my wishes have not, then, quite deceived me, and I *have* a hope, not only of escaping M'Alpine, but of securing the only man I ever really loved."

Isabel did not give utterance to these thoughts. There never had existed between the sisters that habit of confidence on every subject which forms the chief bond of love between sisters in general. They lived together, indeed, rather on the footing of intimate companions than of trusting and trusted friends; neither of them, however, being deficient in affection for the other. They liked one another better than any other women of their acquaintance; they laughed or reasoned together as the case might be; but they seldom talked. And, perhaps, this constraint was natural between two persons whose ways of thinking were so dissimilar. Isabel, however, we must add, felt more cautious of Maria than Maria of her. Maria would much oftener speak of her "designs," as she called them, than Isabel of her attachments. But although, on the present occasion, Isabel hid her secret thoughts from her sister, Maria, who had a portion of her mother's power of divination, saw what was passing in her mind;—saw that her own hint about Lord Warringdon was extremely acceptable, and would be forthwith acted upon. Nor had Isabel ever before thought so highly of Maria's good sense and penetration as she now did. Aware, however, of Maria's objection to "love-talk," she changed the subject to one more interesting to her sister.

"What sort of a young man is Mr. Barham?"

"Quite a fool," replied Maria, composedly.

"I wonder, then, Maria, why you should waste your time talking to him."

"I do not waste my time at all;—I put it out to the best interest imaginable,—cent. per cent., or rather thousand per cent. He has eighteen thousand a year, and a fine place in Leicestershire."

"Yes, but what is his fine place to us?"

"His fine place is nothing to either of us at present, I grant you; it never *will* be anything to you, I know, inasmuch as you strike at nobler quarry;—but it will be a great deal, I expect, to me."

"Why, Maria, you surely would not marry that silly boy?"

"Wouldn't I? *naboclish*, * as Father John says; I wish, my dear, I had the refusing of him, if he were twice the fool he is,—a difficult thing, by the bye."

"Dear Maria, how can you, with your strength and variety of intellect, seriously contemplate marrying an idiot?"

"Isabel," said Maria, for once in her life speaking with emotion,

* Never mind.

"what has this intellect you talk of effected for me? have not all the pretty fools, or ugly heiresses, who started into life with me, been married before me? Show me the man who marries a woman *because* she has intellect. He may forgive it in a pretty woman,—he certainly will in a rich one,—but she who is neither wealthy nor handsome, and yet possesses it, how does she fare?"

"Why, my dear Maria, I never met a clever man yet who did not say that he preferred your conversation to that of all the women he knew."

"Psha, my dear Isabel, what care I about their preferring my conversation? do they prefer myself? Let us come to the point,—which of them has proposed for me? for, after all, disguise the thing as we please, that is the grand object to which our perfections of any kind, and the admiration they excite, naturally tend. You remember the Frenchman who, whenever he heard of a beautiful poem, or heroic action, used to say, '*Tout cela, depuis le Maréchal de France, jusqu'au Savetier, se fait indubitablement pour avoir de quoi mettre dans la bouche; et accomplir les lois de la mastication, selon moi, est le vrai résultat des choses les plus rares de ce monde.*' Now, for 'mastication,' read 'marriage,' and the Frenchman's opinions are mine. Does an empty compliment on my talents repay me, think you, for the trouble I have taken in cultivating them? Clever men '*converse*' with me, 'tis true, but they make love to others, and, what is worse, marry them. So that I have long ago seen that mere cleverness would never answer; and, from the moment I became sure of *that*, I began to say and do strange, sometimes startling, things, till I made them call me odd, in London; and till I was followed by all the fools about town, whom my reputation for mere talent had, in the first instance, frightened away. Well, I came home here; and here I play the buffoon, making people, like that poor silly Barham, laugh, in order to produce effect, in any way; so that, if I *do* marry, I shall owe my success, not to my talents, but to my absurdity;—not to my sense, but to my nonsense. No; my dear Isabel, credit me, talent is infinitely in a woman's way. What a pity I was not born a man, and in good stirring times; then I should have made Europe ring with my name; now, all my energies can get me nothing but a husband, and that husband a fool."

"Maria, you deserve a better fate than that," exclaimed Isabel, struck by the energy, misplaced as it was, of her sister's mind; and, suddenly perceiving the secret spring of actions, and of opinions, which had so often puzzled her, in all her previous examinations of Maria's character.

"Bah!" said Maria, "one fate is as good as another, in the long run; a cloudy morning may change into a bright noon;—it may be very pleasant to be married to a fool, for anything you or I know to the contrary; and, suppose it should not, why, in a hundred years time it will be all the same to me, whether I had been married to Lord Byron or Mr. Barham; or whether I had set the world in a blaze, like Helen or Cleopatra; or had been shown about at a fair, as a rival to the pig-faced lady. At the epoch I allude to, Mrs. Barham and Lady Warringdon will look alike," continued she, playfully taking her sister by the chin: "A little courage is all that is necessary for anything: do you not recollect how much easier it was, when we were both children, to persuade me to have a tooth out, than you? you would cry; and mamma would say, 'Do, my sweet Isabel; you will be so much prettier, you know, when that ugly tooth is out, and that the others have room to range; and your mouth will be quite spoiled, if you keep it in; indeed, it will, my pretty;' but still you cried, and wrung your little hands, in an agony of indecision, as to which of the two appalling misfortunes you would prefer—the pain of losing a tooth, or the horror of injuring your beauty."

Isabel laughed:—"Oh, yes, I remember all those pangs of mine so well! and you, on the contrary, used to submit, with the greatest apparent composure, to a similar operation."

"Yes, chiefly because I had no beauty to lose; and mamma needed only to remind me of all the inconvenience I had already suffered, from the aching tooth, and inform me of all that was yet in store for me; and how I should be kept awake all night by it, and, consequently, rendered unable to attend to my lessons in the morning; and that, then it was likely my cousin, little Anne Rochford, would get before me. This was enough—I made up my mind at once; for I could have better borne to have every tooth in my head dragged out, than to have let 'my cousin little Anne Rochford get before me.' And upon exactly such a principle, I have acted through life. When once convinced that a certain object is necessary to my welfare, I aim at that object, steadily, unswervingly—there may be difficulties accompanying its pursuits—unpleasant, nay, painful ones; I disregard them; I overlook the means, and contemplate only the result. And, hearken, Isabel. I have applied this principle more especially to my matrimonial speculation. This instant, I would take *anybody* who could make *somebody* of me; for you know, as well as I do, that a woman who is not married is nobody. I heard my mother say this first: I looked

about me, and saw that she was right—and I determined to marry, and become somebody as soon as possible. And my first stroke was for a distinguished marriage—but I was checked somewhat in my aspirations after distinction by overhearing the same lady deplore to my aunt, 'how plain poor Maria was, and how sadly difficult it would be to marry her." Now, upon hearing this awkward fact, a girl of much sensibility, or mind, (as your adoring Mr. M'Alpine might say,) would have gone to her room, and cried herself into fits—I acted more wisely. I asked mamma if anything could supply the want of beauty in a girl? 'Yes,' answered she, 'accomplisments, fashion, and, above all, knowledge of the world;' well, I worked away, day and night, at the accomplishments; and I studied human character carefully—and shall I tell you what has been the result of this latter branch of my pursuits? dislike and contempt of the men—disgust and contempt of the women."

"With such an opinion of society, I should be indifferent as to the place I was to occupy in it;" observed Isabel.

"Bad! bad logic, Isabel:" rejoined Maria, "ambition, whether its object be the acquisition of an empire, or of a husband, is yet in its nature pretty much the same. Cæsar had not, I dare say, a more favorable opinion of his fellows than I have, yet he spent a life to win a name amongst them. Perhaps this very contempt of your species increases your desire for distinction; for, who can reconcile himself to be nothing in the eyes of those who are already nothing in his? But, to go on with my autobiography. I saw that, to attain my object, I must not boggle at a few disagreeable adjuncts—I determined, therefore, to take the first tolerable match that God might send, and not be particular about a little folly or ugliness—old age or bad temper—I was not fastidious, you will acknowledge. Yet, was I successful? I had sense, and I had not beauty—so, alas! no one came a wooing to me. Oh, how I have moved heaven and earth to gain even M'Alpine."

"Dear Maria!" cried Isabel, "I wonder the very thought of him did not make you sick."

"I dare say it might have had that effect, if I had allowed myself to think at all about him, but I thought only on M'Alpine Castle, and ten thousand a year! a carriage and servants of my own. In fact, of an establishment! And that's the only way to manage on those occasions. Never allow yourself to think of the man at all, only of the fortune. And now, does not this *exposé* of my present position and future expectations convince you that the distinguished talents you are graciously pleased to attribute to me, my fair sister,

have been hitherto, and are likely always to remain, useless ornaments? and, therefore, that it would be the height of folly in me, to object to the folly of Mr. Barham."

Before Isabel had time to reply the door opened suddenly, and the identical person of whom they were talking bounded into the room.

"Oh, Miss Wilmot, is it true?"

"Is what true?" counter-questioned Maria.

"Is it true that you are going to have a ball?"

"Quite true;" she answered.

"Oh, what fun it will be—an Irish ball—how capital;" and he spun about the room like a teetotum. "Pat Murphy told me all about it; but I thought he was only trotting me; and Lady Anne has been so kind as to ask me to stay here as long as I like. M'Alpine Castle, she tells me, is such a stoopid place—no fun at all going on there—I'm so glad I was overturned on my way to it."

"So am I, too;" thought Maria.

"Do you know," continued Mr. Barham, "that I think Mr. M'Alpine rather stoopid himself? I never should take him for an Irishman; he never makes one laugh, does he, now? I'm so glad I have come here, instead of going to him—I hope you will have the ball soon—guess how many quadrilles I danced once?"

"Nine;" answered Maria.

"What do you say to twenty-four?" cried he, triumphantly, "and wasn't a bit tired afterwards."

"Bless me! I never heard of such a thing:" said Maria, looking astonished, "I declare I think you must be jesting, Mr. Barham."

"Oh, no; quite serious, I assure you, so you see, I shall do capitally in Ireland, shan't I? you must know I fancy myself quite an Irishman already. I asked Pat Murphy and Mr. Molly, if they did not think so, and they said they did. Would you believe, that I know all your servants' names already? such funny names! they made me laugh so. When I go back to England, I intend bringing some Irish servants with me, just to make me laugh, and remind me of the pleasant time I am spending here."

"Please God," thought Maria, "you shall take something back that will still better remind you of "the pleasant time you are spending here." She added aloud, "is this the only province of Ireland that you have visited?"

"Oh, no, I have been all over it. I have been to the Giant's Causeway, such a funny place as it is—such lots of rocks, and things heaped one over the other—and the Lakes of Killarney. I

saw them too; I caught some trout in one of them, and broiled them on the arbutus myself—I wouldn't let anybody assist me—such fun as I had—I fell into the Lake and was nearly drowned, but the guide jumped after me and caught me just as I was sinking, it was very good-natured of him, wasn't it? so I gave him twenty pounds—he deserved that I am sure, and a great deal more, for saving me—did he not, Miss Wilmot?"

"Indeed, he did, treble the sum;" responded Maria, with alacrity—"you paid him, however, very generously; I am sure he gave you abundance of blessings."

"Oh, yes, such a lot of 'em—he told me I was some king or potentate in disguise; and when I told him I was only an English gentleman, travelling about just for a lark—he said he wished all English gentlemen were like me—and that I was the truth of a gentleman—for I had the purse of an Englishman, and the heart of an Irishman! Wasn't that a compliment, Miss Wilmot?"

Before Miss Wilmot had time to answer, he ran on, "You can't imagine how surprised I was when I felt myself in the water. I had not been thinking of anything particular, you know—just sailing about to see the lions of the place; and I got tired looking at them at last; and so leaned back just to take a snooze for a minute or two; when pop, I fell overboard! that was my first adventure on coming to Ireland; and my second was, when I fell into the the bog-hole, here—I hope I shall have some more—I wonder what my third will be, what do you think, Miss Wilmot?"

"To be married to me, I hope;" thought Maria.

"Do guess, Miss Wilmot, do;" urged Mr. Barham.

"Perhaps," said Maria, "it may be to fight a duel."

"Oh, do you think so?" he exclaimed, eagerly—"I should like that of all things—a duel in Ireland! what capital fun 'twould be! so Irish! I should have such laughing with my chums at King's, when I go back to Cambridge, about my Irish duel! they will call me Paddy Barham. Don't you think they will, Miss Wilmot?—I hope they will—I would give anything to be called Paddy Barham."

"But sometimes," said Maria, "people are killed in Irish duels; men shoot, as well as laugh, unfortunately, in this merry, murderous country of ours."

"I should not like to be killed at all, said Mr. Barham, looking rather put out.—"I should hate to die;—I havn't had much fun yet; such a tiresome stoopid thing as it is to be dead!"

Mr. Barham paused a few moments, struck with the possibility

of so funny a thing as an Irish duel terminating in so stoopid a thing as death.

"But, after all, Miss Wilmot," said he, resuming his usual expression of inexpressiveness, "after all, very few persons *are* killed in duels—they are only wounded, mostly.—Now, you must know, I should not mind being wounded at all. When I was at Eton, my master (the boy I was fag to, you know) used to promise me a guinea for every pin I should stick into my hand in half-an-hour—guess how many guineas I got at once.

"Six, perhaps," said Maria.

"What do you say to two dozen!—so, you see, I should not mind a little pain for fun.—But I should have a great objection to being killed—shouldn't you? Oh! Miss Wilmot, will you have the kindness to play me an Irish jig? Mr. Molly says you play so well."

"Heaven be praised," said Maria to herself, as she moved towards the piano—"he will now hold his tongue for a few minutes, at any rate. How thankful I am he did not take it into his head to ask me for an Irish story!"

"What a funny tune!" exclaimed Mr. Barham, enchanted—"How well you do play!—Oh, Miss Wilmot, will you do me a still greater favour?—Will you dance the jig now you have played it for me?—I want so to learn jigs,—else I shall not be able to dance at your ball, you know?"

"Why, you don't suppose we shall dance jigs, do you?" said Maria, laughing.

"I always thought," replied Mr. Barham, laughing too, as he invariably did when he saw any body else laugh, even though it might be, as in the present instance, at himself. "I always thought the jig was the National dance of Ireland."

"Among the peasantry," observed Maria.

"Well, what then will you dance?" enquired Mr. Barham.

"Quadrilles and waltzes."

"Quadrilles and waltzes!" he repeated, in a tone of disappointment—"Psha!—I'm tired of *them;* tiresome, stoopid things!—I'm so sorry! I made sure of such fun! Why, I might as well be in England, if you dance nothing but quadrilles and waltzes!—To be in Ireland, and not dance jigs—how tiresome! I have been three weeks in Ireland, and I have not seen a jig danced yet!"

"Have you not, really?—I'll see what I can do for you at the ball, then; but I can't promise. To tell you the truth, I'm afraid all our rank and fashion will go into fits at the notion of such a thing as jigs anywhere but in a poor man's cabin, or a gentle-

man's kitchen. But at any rate, you can both dance and see them danced, to your heart's content, if you don't mind going into the servants'-hall—I'll send for Paddy the piper, directly, if you like, for this evening."

"Oh, thank you! thank you! dear Miss Wilmot!" his eyes already jig-dancing with delight, as he exclaimed—"A piper! a real Irish piper! oh, what capital fun! an Irish piper!—and Irish servants dancing Irish jigs!—I would not have missed coming to Ireland for a thousand pounds! I wouldn't, I declare!"

"Nor would I have had you miss it for double the sum!" said Maria to herself.

Just at this moment, a little bare-legged, red-headed boy, peeped in, and having surveyed the room, was preparing to withdraw again, exclaiming, "She isn't in it;" when he was stopped by Maria.

"What are you looking for Meehelleen?"

"Lookin' every place for my Lady, I am, Miss; an' can't find her."

"Why—what do you want of her, Meehelleen?"

"The masther, Miss, that sent me for her."

"So, my father is returned, is he?" said Isabel, hastily throwing aside the book she had taken up on Mr. Barham's entrance—"I did not expect him back so soon!"—which observation, had it been the faithful transcript of her thoughts, would have run thus—"So, Lord Warringdon is returned? I did not expect him back so soon!"

"Where is my father, Meehelleen?"

"Below in the kitchen, Miss."

"What is he doing there?"

"Seeing after the English Lord—mysel' never can't remimber the name he has on him, Miss."

"Seeing after him," repeated Isabel—"how do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing very pertickler, Miss, only a fall he got from his horse."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Isabel, hastily—"Is he hurt? Meehelleen, can't you answer?"

"Troth! I don't know, Miss; but I dare say he is—Paudeen tould me he heered Misther Kelly telling Tom Lannigan, Misther M'Alpine's man, that Pat Murphy said 'twas Mrs. M'Donogh's opinion that he'd never ate a bit again."

"Nonsense, Meehelleen," interrupted Maria, perceiving Isabel grow deadly pale—"What rigmarole story have you got at there?—What does Mrs. M'Donough know about the matter?"

"Faix, I don't know, Miss, but every one in the counthry does be sayin' Mrs. M'Donogh is mighty knowledgable in regard of physics an' cures—How well she said, whin Barney Sullivan's horse was clifted an' smashed intirely, that *he'd* niver ate a bit agin, Miss?"

"Yes—but Lord Warringdon has not been clifted nor smashed entirely, like Barney Sullivan's horse! so Mrs. M'Donogh may be wrong after all, Meehelleen. But, pray, why didn't you say at once that he was hurt?"

"Sure the masther didn't bid me, Miss, tell any body but my Lady."

"The master didn't bid you, Meehelleen!" cried Maria—"Couldn't your own sense tell you that much, child? So, I suppose, if the master happened to fall from his own horse, and wasn't able to speak, you wouldn't tell any body, because, indeed, he didn't bid you?"

"Hubbaboo! I'd *riz* the counthry, let alone the house, if the masther hurted his little finger; not to talk of breaking his bones. God betwixt us an' harum," cried little Meehelleen, making the sign of the cross.

"Why, then, didn't you tell us that Lord Warringdon got the fall?" enquired Maria.

"Sure, Miss, I didn't think it signified, in regard of his bein' a foreigner, an'"—

"Didn't think it signified?" cried Isabel, indignantly. "What an ill-natured little creature you must be!"

Meehelleen hung his head, and scraped the floor with the largest digit on his not very clean little foot. Mr. Barham was so busy, watching the little Irish boy shifting from one bare mottled leg to another, scratching his head and scraping the floor, while undergoing this interrogatory, that he never observed how much more important a circumstance Miss Isabel Wilmot seemed to consider Lord Warringdon's having fallen from his horse, and "never likely to ate a bit again," than Meehelleen thought it.

"Come, Isabel, love," said Maria, "let us go and see how the case really stands."

Meehelleen, in high glee at escaping any further examination from the young ladies, scampered off to ascertain, for his own satisfaction, whether "the English Lord was only kilt, or actually kilt dead;" and Mr. Barham scampered off after Meehelleen.

"Don't be frightened, Isabel," said Maria, "as she felt her sister's hand tremble on her arm—"you may be certain it is nothing

very serious, or my father would have sent no message by that stupid, blundering Meehelleen."

Her suspicion proved correct. They found Lord Warringdon standing in the midst of a group of idlers, talking to Mr. Wilmot, who was inspecting the letter-bag, just arrived *viâ* Andy M'Donogh, surnamed Andy the Post. The Viscount looked a little paler than usual, and his arm was in a sling; otherwise he did not appear by any means in a state to justify the ominous prediction of Mrs. M'Donogh, as detailed by Meehelleen on Paudeen's authority, which prediction really ran thus:

"'Tis well he was not hurted so he'd never ate a bit again—for there's many a one lost his life upon a smaller provocation."

"I'm glad to find you still in the land of the living, my Lord, and likely to continue there;" said Maria—"Meehelleen all but buried you."

"Oh, 'tis a mere trifle"—returned Lord Warringdon, smiling, "a sprained wrist only—fortunately, the accident occurred close to the dispensary, so the injury was promptly remedied."

"I hope you do not suffer much pain?" said Isabel, who had begun to recover her self-possession. The tone and look by which these simple words were accompanied left no doubt on the mind of the person to whom they were addressed of the sincerity with which they were uttered—confirmed too as they were by the agitation he had remarked on her first entering the kitchen. What man ever fails to notice the interest he inspires?

"Here are letters for you, my Lord!" said Mr. Wilmot.

The party were leaving the kitchen, when Barham called after Maria:

"Oh—Miss Wilmot, you are forgetting the piper."

"Perhaps, as Lord Warringdon has met this accident," replied Maria, "it might be as well to defer it till another evening—the noise might be disagreeable to him."

"Oh, no—I beg you don't alter your arrangements on my account—the pain is very trifling, and the piper will serve rather to amuse than annoy me."

"You are quite right, Lord Warringdon:" exclaimed Barham, delighted. "I assure you, a little fun is the best cure in the world for pain of any kind:" and, so saying, off he galloped in search of a messenger, to carry Maria's mandate to Paddy *Bacha*, commanding his attendance that evening.

CHAPTER IX.

"HA!" exclaimed Lord Warringdon, as he cast his eye over the letter just handed him by Mr. Wilmot. "My father tells me that parliament is to be dissolved immediately. What shall I do? this unlucky sprain will prevent my holding a pen, and yet I ought not to lose a moment in addressing the county. Is there any one here who would have the charity to lend me a hand, while I dictate?" said he, looking round on the group.

"You shall have Isabel," said Lady Anne, good-humouredly. "She is always her father's secretary; and, as he happens to be very lazy, he does not allow her pen much rest, I assure you; and, thanks to such good practice, she has become quite *au fait*. A capital electioneering address-writing young lady, I can tell you; so here she is at your service. You have no objection, have you, my love?" she added, in a stage-whisper, to her daughter, while she settled one of her pretty, soft curls. "I'll explain to M'Alpine, you know, and, I dare say, he will forgive my disposing of you for this morning. So politics and business to-day,—love and Byron to-morrow," she continued, smiling archly. "Well, good people, I will no longer disturb you. Come, my dear Wilmot, you and I are *de trop*, here;—*au revoir*." She nodded good-humouredly, and left the room.

"I have many apologies to make to you," said Lord Warringdon, for having so unceremoniously accepted Lady Anne's offer of your assistance; particularly," added he, smiling sarcastically, "as I understand you have made other arrangements for the day."

"I am not aware of any engagement that I would not willingly have given up, to be of service to you," replied Isabel, in a faultering tone. But, fearing she had said too much, she added, blushing, "Or, indeed, to any person, under the same circumstances."

"Thank you for that flattering qualification," rejoined the Viscount, laughing, and contemplating his fair secretary with all the self-complacency of a gratified, vain man.

"Is your arm comfortable now?" she asked, anxious to escape from his scrutinizing look. "I fancy the sling is rather high;—shall I lower it?"

Her companion felt more than half inclined to have answered the question by touching with his lips the pretty little trembling hand of the fair querist. Had she been married, in all probability he

would have done so; but, in these days, to kiss a single woman's hand, is tantamount to a declaration. And so the admiring, but prudent, Viscount contented himself with thanking her, in words, for her kindness. "She is a nice creature," thought he; "what a pity she has not money!"

For an hour, or two, the young politicians continued immersed in business. But, as everything must have an end, the address was, at length, composed and copied out. The Viscount found himself assisted by Isabel, not only in the manual execution, but also in the composition of the document; yet, her assistance had been given with so much tact, that she appeared rather to have quickly seized, and skilfully embodied, his ideas, than to have suggested any of her own; so that he himself seemed even to deserve the whole credit of the performance. Never before, indeed, had he been able to clothe his thoughts in such neat and close expressions; his self-love was, therefore, gratified; and, being in good-humour with himself, he was naturally so with the person who had proved instrumental in producing this self-complacency.

For some time previous to this morning, Lord Warringdon had been tiring of being nothing but an *Epouvantail des Maris*, and had desired to play a *rôle* in public life. But, unfortunately, he was blessed with more pretensions than application; and he had often wished to possess and to have constantly near him some person capable of supplying his want of energy, but who would, meantime, be satisfied to allow him all the credit due to success and its results, not only from society, but from his very self. He was aware, however, that such devotedness could be expected from a woman only, from a wife, in fact. And where could he find a woman uniting the ability and the affection necessary for such an office? For more than a year he had been asking himself this question, and in the course of this morning it at length occurred to him that Isabel Wilmot was an answer to it. As for Isabel, her care of the *amour-propre* of her companion had been prompted simply by affection;—by the unwilled, but unerring skill of the heart; yet, had she acted from prudence and calculation, she could not have devised a better plan for advancing her interests. For, in these days of Utilitarianism, when every generous impulse is arrested by a "*cui bono*," the woman who succeeds in impressing a man with the notion that she can be useful to him, has presented to his mind an *argumentum ad hominem*, that, sooner or later, will work to her advantage, nay, help to get her a husband.

A characteristic of genius is, not that it can exactly create cir-

cumstances, but that it knows how to employ them. Lady Anne could not have made her husband's Arab take fright at an old woman, and throw its rider, upon that day, more than upon any other; still less could she have ensured to the said young rider a sprained wrist, instead of a broken neck or leg. Neither could Lady Anne have influenced his Britannic Majesty to dissolve his faithful Lords and Commons, just at this time, for the purpose of *synchronizing* with the Viscount's tumble off his exotic horse. Still, however, was Lady Anne able to turn these events to good account. Her Ladyship's previous manœuvring had so completely mystified her young guest that he never suspected her of any motive, but that of good nature, in her selection of Isabel for his amanuensis.

When Lady Anne returned, she found the young pair seated, side by side, chatting over the fire, Lord Warringdon's arm on the back of Isabel's chair, quite lover-like.

"Fie! fie! there you are talking, you idle creatures, instead of writing; it should have been business first, and play afterwards, as we say to the children! Oh, you naughty two!" said she, playfully tapping her daughter's cheek, and Lord Warringdon's shoulder.

"Thus do I disprove your foul calumny," replied he, in the same tone, holding up his address.

"No! have you really finished it? how quick you have been—Admirable!" cried she; "nothing can be better;—so dexterously composed;—no one interest sacrificed to that of another. Those who wish that sinecures should be kept, because they have a chance of getting them; and those who wish to have them abolished, because they never expect to profit by them;—those who want the National Debt taken off, and those who would like to increase the Pension List: those who cry out for Catholic Emancipation, and those who insist on keeping up the Protestant Ascendancy; each and all may claim Warringdon as their champion. Yes; the gradations of form and colour are skilfully managed, indeed, in this piece of political Mosaic! Bravo, my Lord! How clever that girl is!" said she to herself; then, turning to her daughter, "What a clever diplomatist this member of ours will make; here is finesse enough for a European empire wasted on an Irish county!"

Lady Anne was aware that the great object of Lord Warringdon's ambition, for some time, had been to figure as a cabinet minister. Now she saw him smile, highly gratified.

"I am very much flattered that you approve it; but recollect that I had an invaluable assistant in your fair daughter," he politely added.

"Oh, as for my poor Isabel," replied the mother, kissing her daughter's snowy forehead, "I don't imagine that she could have been of any service to you.—No, you are not quite *diplomate* enough to persuade me you think that." Then, lowering her voice as she addressed her daughter, "M'Alpine is in the next room; you may now go and chat with him, love, for he is quite moping and miserable without you."

Lady Anne perceived, with much satisfaction, that Lord Warringdon's eyes followed Isabel, as she moved reluctantly out of the room; and when the door closed on her graceful figure, and when he turned round to look at the fire, that he appeared in a very bad humour.

"Poor M'Alpine," said she, laughing, "has been quite like a fish out of water, all day. My heart smites me for having taken Isabel away from him: but he's so good-humoured about it, poor fellow! The most amiable being in the world."

Lord Warringdon brushed up his dark curls, and leaned back in his chair, with all the nonchalance of an exclusive, listening, to an irksome subject.

"What do you think of my son-in-law elect?" said she, after a pause.

"Candidly?" enquired he, with affected indifference.

"Oh, by all means," replied she.

"Candidly, then, I think him a devilish ill-looking, stupid fellow."

"I don't at all agree with you, my Lord," said she, with well-acted warmth; "he is the reverse of stupid, he possesses considerable talent; and, as for looks, men never judge fairly of one another there;—he is quite as well to be liked as the generality of people," glancing somewhat offensively at her companion.

The corners of his Lordship's handsome mouth curled into an expression of quiet disdain. "My dear Lady Anne, recollect I did not obtrude my opinion of Mr. M'Alpine,—you rather pressed me for it."

Lady Anne shook her foot a few seconds, a gesture Lord Warringdon had remarked in her as indicative of displeasure;—he hummed an opera air. "I should be very much obliged to you, my Lord," she continued, "not to be as candid with my daughter as you have been with myself, in your criticisms upon a person about to become a member of my family. Girls are foolish and romantic, and imagine they must be passionately attached to a man in order to marry him; and I, therefore, make it a personal request

that you, in future, keep your opinion of Mr. M'Alpine to yourself. It might do Isabel irreparable injury, by setting her against him."

"Setting her against Mr. M'Alpine!" repeated he, sarcastically; "how could that be possible? I understood you to say he was quite the *beau ideal* of your imagination, the quintessence of all perfection, moral and physical."

"Allow me to set you right, my Lord," replied she, with much offended dignity; "I am perfectly aware that Mr. M'Alpine is not a Colonel C. in beauty, nor a Lord L. G. in talent; all I said was, that he had as much of both as people in general," laying emphasis on the last words. "And I add this, that he is a most excellent, kind-hearted, high-principled, honourable young man, passionately attached to my daughter, who begins, at length, to appreciate his merit, and to see that she has a much better chance of happiness with him than with a beauty, a genius, or a man of fashion."

"*C'est possible*," replied his Lordship," with an indifference intended to be provoking; "*Moi je ne dispute jamais, surtout avec les dames*,—will you permit me to touch the bell for my servant? 'tis time to dress for dinner."

Lady Anne bowed stiffly, and Lord Warringdon determined to inform Isabel, the very first opportunity of his opinion concerning Mr. M'Alpine, should she, indeed, happen to be ignorant of it.

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Wilmot and Maria, followed by Mr. Barham, laughing as usual, "ready to die."

"As soon as she thought that she might resume her usual blandness towards the Viscount, she turned to her husband;—"You have not seen Lord Warringdon's address yet, I believe;—'tis really admirable."

"Oh, I recognise Isabel's touches here," said the careless, undesigning father, pleased at this additional evidence of his daughter's talents.

"Yes," said Lady Anne, rising and touching her husband's shoulder, as she leaned over him;—"You know Lord Warringdon sprained his wrist, and could not write; so it is in Isabel's handwriting; but that does not signify."

"Oh, no, to be sure," rejoined Wilmot, understanding his wife's hint. "'Tis excellent, my dear Lord,—cannot possibly be better. Here, Maria, have you seen it?"

"What is it all about?" enquired Mr. Barham, struck by the admiration which this sheet of paper excited, as it passed from hand to hand;—"Is it a hoax Lord Warringdon has been writing, Msis Wilmot?"

"Why, really, 'tis very much the same thing," replied she, laughing; "'tis an address to the county."

"Oh, is that all?—something political only," said he, in a tone of disappointment. "I wonder that people ever trouble themselves about politics; stoopid things!"

About two hours after dinner, the door opened, and Pat Murphy entered, smiling.

"Is he come," cried Barham.

"He is, sir."

"Oh, Miss Wilmot, he's come. Good news, Lord Warringdon, he's come." And away he flew, clapping his hands, followed by Maria.

"What in the world's the matter with him?" cried Mr. M'Alpine. "Who is it that's come?"

"No less a personage than Paddy *Boucha*," said Mr. Wilmot, laughing.

"Ra'ally, I'm astonished at your patience, Lady Anne, with such a silly, uninteresting crature as he is. I am ra'ally exthramely annoyed that I have been the manes of inflicting him on you."

"Pray don't say a word about it, my dear friend," replied Lady Anne, with one of her most gracious smiles. "Any guest of your's would be welcome here."

"Unfortunately," resumed Mr. M'Alpine, "I could not take him away without going myself; and how could I do that? How could I," he added, whispering tenderly to Isabel, who was seated between him and the Viscount, "how could I have the courage to tear myself from her I adore,—from the idol of my soul,—the soft star of my destiny? What would my fair charmer have said, in that case, of her truant knight?"

"I was just going to ask you to accompany me to the revels, below," said Lord Warringdon."

"And why not?" replied Isabel, eagerly. "I am quite ready."

"Oh, no, I must not take you away a second time from 'love and Byron,' said he, glancing alternately at Mr. M'Alpine and Lady Anne. "Your mamma and I have had a battle royal, to-day, about the '*beau futur*,' and she has commanded me, on pain of her imperial displeasure, never to say, or even to think, that Byron could have a fitter interpreter, or Love a more eloquent or persuasive votary; and, moreover, that it must be felony, without benefit of clergy, to let you suppose that I, or any body else, could ever imagine greater perfection. I never saw a woman so much in love with her daughter's lover in all my life. More than you yourself, I think, *belle Fiancée*."

"You have chosen a disagreeable subject, my Lord," said she, colouring; "I should be obliged by your changing it."

"Your wishes are laws to me, my fair secretary," said he, bowing with mock deference; "never again will I say aught to disturb your equanimity. Am I forgiven? and will you take my arm, and accompany me to where they are 'tripping on the light fantastic toe,' as the *Morning Post* has it?"

Isabel smiled forgiveness, and they quitted the room together.

CHAPTER X.

When Lord Warringdon and Isabel entered the servants' hall, they were received with the same manifestations of joy which had greeted Maria and Mr. Barham. The huzzaing and clapping of hands was, indeed, excessively gratifying; but it was also excessively deafening; inasmuch as every member of the Castle Wilmot household, reinforced by travellers "going the road," who had lounged in for their dinner, and the idlers of the neighbourhood, who had been attracted by the piper, contributed, each and all, their utmost strength of palms and lungs, to do honour to "the quality." The acclamations for the last come couple even surpassed, perhaps, those which had welcomed the first—for in addition to the company already alluded to, great numbers of the M'Alpine tenants (who had strayed over to Castle Wilmot to see their master in consequence of some one of the multitudinous occurrences which an Irish tenant is perpetually in the habit of referring to his landlord,) were present; and they, looking upon Miss Isabel Wilmot, as their master's property, received her with all the respect and warmth due to their future mistress; crying out, "High for Miss Isabel Wilmot! high for Master M'Alpine!" A couple already occupied "the flure,"—viz., Peggy the pretty laundry-maid, and Jim Naughten, of *sans*-pole-driving memory, who had "stepped in with his horses," on his way homewards to Masther Costelloe, from some break-neck excursion. Peggy acknowledged the entrance of "the quality," by a curtsey, as she sidled along in her dance, and kept her eyes modestly bent on the ground, never by any chance raising them to the face of her partner. Jim, on his part, evinced his sense of their presence,

by whirling his hand round his head, and jumping more vigorously than he had done before, and cutting five or six times in the air.

"The lower orders of England," observed Isabel to Lord Warringdon, "suspend their merriment either from respect, or shyness, upon the appearance of their superiors; but our people, who have a truer sense of what real politeness consists in, laugh and dance as before, rightly inferring that their masters and mistresses have come purposely to witness their pleasantry, and, therefore, that respect and attention are best evinced by making an effort to amuse."

Mr. Barham was almost in convulsions of laughter at the "funny piper, and the funny dancing."

"God save all here;" cried a voice behind him.

"Oh, Mr. Molly, is that you? I am so glad to see you—" said he, seizing the priest's hands and nearly wringing them off—"I have missed you so much, you can't think! I was just wondering what had become of you!—What capital fun this is, Mr. Molly?"

"What fun, Mr. Barham? I don't see any fun, where is it?"

"Why there;" rejoined Mr. Barham, pointing to the dancers. "Don't you see the droll postillion dancing?"

"A what—droll postilion? Let's thry and see:" cried Father John, looking over Barham's shoulder. "Pooh—'tis nobody but Jim Naughten dancing the way he always does. I never saw one like him," said he, turning to Maria, "for seeing fun, where nobody else but himself can see it. *I* don't see anything so mighty comical in a girl and boy dancing; one would think 'twas dancing on their heads they were, or doing some quare trick or other: he keeps laughing so. Them English has no sense at all, Miss Maria, honey."

"Perhaps, we would laugh as heartily as he does, if we saw all this for the first time, Father John:" observed Maria.

"May be so, *agra*, you know better than me."

The first dance ended, and punch and even good raw whiskey, were handed about.

The priest took a glass, and, holding it over his head—"Here's to the health of the young ladies. Good husbands to them, and soon—hip, hip, hurrah!"

This toast was received with huzzas and laughter, interpersed with cries of "Amin—amin—long life to 'em, the darlings—aye, troth, good husbands to them, and soon—and the sooner the betther!"

"An' now the gintlemen's health:" cried a voice in the crowd.

"Let each of the young ladies dhrink the health of the gintleman that's wid her:" this amendment was welcomed with cries of, "success to ye, Jim—my blessing to ye!"

"Very well—" said Maria, laughing good humouredly, "here's to the health of William Barham, Esq., of Cralcourt, Leicestershire, and may he always continue as fond of fun and of Ireland as he is at this present moment—hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Glory to ye! comical crature ye are, sure enough!" exclaimed the laughing and applauding crowd.

"Now, Miss Isabel!" but Miss Isabel hesitated—"'tis your turn now, *agra;*" said Mrs. M'Donogh—"why don't you take your patthern afther your sisther, my honey—Do, *asthore ma cree*, or else," continued she, lowering her voice, "the tinants will be thinking 'tis proud ye are—there's my darlin':" cried she triumphantly, as Isabel prepared to oblige her—"I knew well the delight of my heart, wouldn't refuse her father's ould nurse."

"Whisht! whisht! hould your bother—don't you see she is going to spake—don't be making sich a noise:" roared one to the other, as they began to applaud before she had begun to speak.

Silence was at length obtained, and all eyes were fixed on Isabel as she gave her toast—

"Here's to the health of Lord Warringdon, and may he, as our representative, ever prove the friend of the county, and of Ireland in general; and," she added, falteringly, "live long and happily!"

"And a pretty Irish wife to him:" added Jim Naughten—"Troth, he might go farther and fare worse;" glancing at Isabel. Cries of "Success to ye, Jim!—high for Miss Isabel; high for her the darling purty, quiet little cratur! and a good husband to her, and soon!" quite confounded the poor girl.

Lord Warringdon perceived her embarrassment, and bowing, and smiling his thanks for the honour she had done him, took the glass from her trembling hand.

"To the health of Mr. Wilmot and his family!" said he—"my best wish for Ireland is, that all her landlords may be like him, and all her women like his daughters."

"Glory to ye—glory to ye, my Lord—long life to ye!" shouted the people, as they thundered forth their sympathy in his wishes for Ireland, and for what they deemed the first family in Ireland.

"What a darlin' purty couple, himsel' and Miss Isabel would make;" observed Peggy the laundry-maid, to her admirer, Pat Murphy.

"They would so:" agreed Pat, who happened to be in a particularly complaisant humour that evening—"they would so, a' most as purty couple as yoursel' and mysel', Peggy.

"The Divil's impudence you have, sure enough," cried Peggy,

"to be comparing the likes of us to the likes of them! But, now Pat," she added, in a coaxing tone, "don't you see yoursel', I was right?"

"When *asthore?* when you tould me I was the darlin' of your heart, is it? You war indeed, Peggy."

"Faith, I never tould you that," replied the bashful Peggy, "I'd be very sorry to be telling an untruth:" spite of herself, however, smiling slily.

"Well, may be," rejoined Pat, "you mightn't spake intirely so plain as that; any how, you tould it me, the way I'd undherstand, 'tis that was your maning."

"Don't bother us," interrupted his gentle mistress, "'tisn't that I mane at all, you know very well. No—but wasn't I right when I said, who know'd but may be, the English Lord and one of the young ladies would be a match—wasn't I right, Pat?"

"To be sure you war—arn't you always right, *ma colleen dhas?*" replied he, gallantly, at the same time causing her to exclaim—

"Behave now, Pat Murphy! bad cess to your impudence! your aqual for impidence Pat Murphy, I never seen, and the quality by, and all—bad manners to ye."

"The Lord save us! forgive us this onst, and God bless ye, Peggy—I forgot the quality was in it—I'll wait again till they're gone, *ma vourneen.*"

"Faith, my advice to ye is to keep your hands to yoursel' for good an' all, Pat Murphy, an' behave yoursel', whether the quality is in it, or no—or let who will be in it."

"'Tis you would be mad, sure enough, if I tuck ye at your word;" rejoined Pat, laughing provokingly.

"*Scnadth wanordth!** Pat Murphy! how dare ye say that? I've the greatest mind in the world to give ye"—Pat advanced his face with a coxcomical expression that enraged his prudish mistress—and she raised a somewhat large hand, and let it fall heavily on his cheek—"Take *that*, ye concated *omadawn* ye!"—

Pat laughed and rubbed his cheek—"Ye *laned* rather heavy. Peggy, my pet—you've a'most smashed my jaw my honey."

Mr. Barham, who had been listening to the colloquy, and who had succeeded in stifling his laughter, by nearly stifling himself in his pocket-handkerchief, could no longer restrain his delight, but clapping his hands in ecstasy at such a specimen of Irish flirtation; crying out, "You served him right—how good! oh, what capital fun!"

* A hungry cry in the morning to ye!

The piper struck up a merry tune, and Winny the housemaid came up and dropped a curtsey—"Mr. Baram, if you plaze, sir," said she smiling and blushing.

"What is it? do you wish to sit down?" asked he, civilly making room for her.

"It's axing you to dance she is, sir;" said Peggy.

"Is she really? I am very much obliged to you, Winny, but I'm sadly afraid I don't know how to dance a jig yet. I should put you out I'm sure."

"Oh, not at all, sir;" replied the girls, chiming in together—"'tis mighty asy, you have nothing in the world to do, sir, only just to humour the tune, and whatever side of the room your partner does be, to keep opposite to her."

"And when it's over, sir," interrupted Pat, "just to put your arm round her purty little waist, and say thank ye, my Pet, an' shoot the action to the word, sir."

"What a funny fellow you are!" cried Mr. Barham.

"Hould your bother, Pat Murphy!" said Winny, reddening with offended modesty.

The crowd cheered the young Englishman as he stood up to dance.

"Ax your partner what tune she'll have, sir;" whispered Jim Naughten.

Barham adopted the suggestion.

"Oh, 'tis all the same to me, sir, whatever yourself would like, would be plasing to me."

"No, let you choose, Winny, you know best what tune will suit us."

"Ax her, sir, would she have 'Tattered Jack Walsh.'"

"Oh, what a funny name;" cried Barham.

"Choke ye! Jim Naughten!" cried Winny, frowning.

"Perhaps you do not like to dance that tune?" observed Barham, good-naturedly—"you can choose any other you like better."

"Oh, there's nothing she likes so well as that, sir;" interrupted Jim, laughing—"she doats upon it."

"You have some joke about it, I am sure, Jim; do tell me what it is? there's a good fellow!" cried Barham, eagerly.

"Oh, nothing at all, sir, only a boy, a friend of mine, one Jack Walsh, that does be dhriving along with myself, for Misther Costelloe; and himself and Winny does be mighty great together, he's her bachelor, you know, sir."

"Faith, an' he isn't;" interrupted Winny, frowning at her lover's *fides achates* Jim Naughten.

"An' he's a great fighter and roisterer at fairs, an' pattherns, sir," continued Jim, "an' one turn, he got the worst of it, at the fair of Derrymanagoslogh, hard by the Castle here. He comes in here the same night to Winny with his clothes tore to tatthers, the most miserable looking cratur ever you seen, sir, an' ever sence we called him Tatthered Jack Walsh, after the jig—an' Winny does be mad, on account of the joke about her bachelor. Whenever you want to make Winny come up stairs smart to you, sir, you've nothing to do but to call out over the bannister, 'Tatthered Jack Walsh, an' 'tis she will skelp off to ye, in a jiffy, sir."

Barham enjoyed amazingly this piece of Irish wit—while waiting for some tune which should suit Winny's taste, and yet not furnish Jim with materials for mischievous applications. Barham talked to his partner.

"So, in Ireland, the women ask the men to dance—what funny girls you must be! But when you want to be married, do ye ask the men to marry ye?"

"Ax the min to marry us, is it? Musha, faith an' we don't—why would we? Thank God! there's no occasion, indeed we'd be giving ourselfs that throuble any how, they're good warrants to say that much for themselfs. Faith, they'd have to wait long enough if they waited till we'd ax 'em—pity indeed!" Here the jig struck up: "Now, if you plase, Mr. Barham."

Barham, who had rather a good ear, contrived "to humour the tune," very tolerably for a first attempt; and his love of fun inspired him with all the agility necessary—he jumped and shouldered very much in the style of Jim Naughten, to the inexpressible delight and admiration of the by-standers.

"What an iligant match himself an' Miss Maria would be!" observed Peggy; "they have such gaining ways with them, jist cut off the same patthern the pair of 'em—An' so fond as he is of her—evermore running afther her, you'd think he'd lose his life when she's out of his sight a minute—axing about her, and looking every place for her—an' thin such screeching-laughing as they do be having together, when he finds her onst more."

"Pooh! he is no match for her, he has no sense:" remarked Bartly the groom.

"'Tis you that's the judge, sure enough, whether he has or no," retorted Peggy.

"What matthers about his sinse?" observed the cook. "She has enough, I'll be bound, for hersel' and himsel'."

"Twill be a match, you 'll see:" insisted Peggy.

"It won't;" cried the groom.

"It will;" reiterated Peggy. "Moreover, Miss Isabel an' the English Lord will be another match, as sure as my name is Peggy Flanagan."

"Oh, thin, your name isn't Peggy Flanagan, so," interrupted Mr. M'Alpine's groom, "that will never be a match, I can tell you—"

"Why won't it?" demanded Peggy—

"Becase," answered he, "my masther Mr. M'Alpine will niver let her lave this country—he intends keeping her for himsel'.—He doats down upon her, an' well he may, for she's a most beautiful, iligant, finely-edicated young lady, as ever you'd wish to see—jist the moral of himsel', for all the world—they're as like one another as two pays. Every one in the country does be saying they're made a purpose for one another—You niver seen sich a way as he does be going on about her, up at the Castle—there a most iligant mare he has, he has called afther her—an' a boat he has on the lake that goes by her name, too. An' he does be making poetry on her out of a poethry book he has up at the Castle, at home—an' he does be repating the poethry when he does be out riding. An' I'm credibly informed," continued he, lowering his voice, "that he's come here this turn a purpose to make his proposals for her out o' hand—See there! how he's jist come in along with her Ladyship—look at himsel' an' Miss Isabel, now—Isn't he coorting her, like mad, this minute—see how well he can't take his eyes off her, but does be whispering to her, something I'll be bound she's mighty plased to hear, see how purty an' modest she keeps looking on the ground."

"My blessing to her—she's in the right of it!" muttered Peggy, unheard by the last speaker—"not to be looking on an ugly yallow cratur of his kind. Poor girl, as I am, Mrs. M'Donogh, I'd rather beg the world over with one I'd like, than I'd be sitting on a throne of goold with the likes of him, beside the—"

"Mysel' don't so much mislike him, troth," observed Winny, who had just joined the group of Castle Wilmot followers, then occupied descanting, out of hearing of the M'Alpine's, on the ill-favoured visage of their lord—"he's always a good warrant to give me five or six tin pinny bits, if he stops but the night—an' I niver seen a gintleman, less throuble in his room, than himsel'—He's a mighty clane jintleman, Peggy—mighty clane, itsel'—the one jug o' wather, an' the one towel lasts him a for'night—an' thin such other splashing and washing, an' slopping, an' lathering as other gintlemen keeps, one must be always running every minute to give a touch to the flure, Peggy—"

"I'm not saying whether he's a clane gintleman or no," rejoined Peggy—"I have nothing to say to him good or bad, thank God! all I'm saying is, that the English Lord would be far beyant him, in regard of a husband for Miss Isabel—"

"*Avoch*—to be sure, he would, Peggy—it will be a match you'll see, Peggy."

"A' to be sure it will—isn't that what I'm saying all night?"

"When my masther, Mr. M'Alpine, marries Miss Isabel Wilmot," observed Tom Lannigan, Mr. M'Alpine's man, to Mr. Kelly, and Pat Murphy, "what rejoicing there will be all over the counthry! what an illigant wedding we'll have. Castle Wilmot, and M'Alpine Castle will carry everything before 'em—the two finest intherests in the county, Mr. Kelly—they'll return the two mimbers, asy—"

"Faith they would so—" observed Mr. Kelly—"as asy as they'd swallow a tumbler o' punch—"

"Aye troth—" said Pat.

Mr. Kelly and Pat Murphy, as men and politicians, were less annoyed by Mr. M'Alpine's "yallowness," than the females of the household. To return "two mimbers for the county" was, in their opinion, the culminating point of human grandeur—and Mr. M'Alpine, having the greatest number of freeholders after their master, was, of course, the greatest man in their eyes, and a far more important personage than Viscount Warringdon, consequently a much more desirable alliance for the family. In the glorious days of the "*forty shillingers*," a gentleman's importance was estimated not so much by the productiveness of his acres, as by their quantity, and the number of ragged human beings he could contrive to *pen* upon them. Lord Warringdon might be the first man in England, for anything Mr. Kelly or Pat Murphy knew or cared to the contrary—but he was not "the first man in the county," any how, nor the second neither. The Castle Wilmot household divided, however, on this question. The men being all for Mr. M'Alpine; the women for Lord Warringdon, "because he was a beautiful gintleman, and so grand looking:" because Mrs. M'Donogh had said that Mr. Symmons had tould her that the finest ladies in the land were fighting who should have him, an' that he could have his pick and choose which ever he liked of 'em, married or no—an' that he lived in the greatest state and grandeur with the greatest retinue of servants that ever was seen.

"Pat, you'll see 'twill be the English Lord she marries," said Peggy.

"It won't," rejoined Pat.

"*Naboclish*,—you'll see if it won't. Mrs. M'Donogh, ma'am, won't it?"

"Of coorse it will," answered Mrs. M'Donogh.

"Why of coorse?" asked Pat.

"I am not going to inform you, Pat Murphy, what private rasons I have for thinking so," returned Mrs. M'Donogh, consequentially.

"One thing I'm sure of, at any rate," said Peggy, "hersel' and Miss Maria will be married soon, whomsoever it may be to, on account of the dhrame I had."

"What dhrame, Peggy?" enquired Mrs. M'Donogh.

"A great dhrame I had, ma'am, about cats and dogs fighting."

"Ay, that's a fine dhrame,—you couldn't have a better one for marriage, Peggy."

"So I always heerd tell, ma'am, that to dhrame of cats an' dogs fighting was the finest sign in the world of a marriage."

"Tell us your dhrame, an' God bless you, Peggy," said Mrs. M'Donogh.

"Dhraming I was, ma'am, that I was sitting below, in the scullery, dhrying my clothes, becase the chimbly smoked so in the laundhry, I was afeard they'd be all black. An' while I was sitting there, wondhering how long they took to dhry, there come in a big black dog, with red eyes."

"Are ye sure his eyes was red, Peggy?" demanded Mrs. M'Donogh.

"I am, ma'am,—and he kept running about every place, as though he was looking for something. Mysel' got frickened, he looked so big an' terrible; an' I was staling out unknownst, when I heard a cat mewing outside the scullery window, sich other mewing, Mrs. M'Donogh, you niver heard. In my dhrame, I thought 'twas Kutty Murphy's cat, that run wild, an' used to be keeping in the shrubbery, beyant, an' the little boys that used to be throwin' stones at her, you know; the masther bid 'em take care for their lives, would they do the like agin. Well, I thought 'twas Kutty Murphy's cat, so I opened the window, an' let her in, for fear the masther would be mad if I did'nt; and when I did, hersel' and himsel' began fighting. Och! Mrs. M'Donogh, they bate all ever you seen! tearing an' scratching, an' snarling an spitting, like mad. My heart was bateing like anything when I woke, Mrs. M'Donogh."

"That's a fine dhrame, Peggy; I'll explain it to you."

"Thank'ee ma'am."

"The big black dog," resumed Mrs. M'Donogh, "is a gintle-

man of great fortune an' clever appearance ; you remimber my axin g ye, Peggy, were ye sure of the colour of his eyes ?"

"I do, ma'am," rejoined the dreamer.

"Red eyes," continued the expounder, "is a sign he comes from England ; an' lookin' about every place is a sign he comes over here for something particular,—ye know the English Lord come lookin' for the county ; the cat mewing is Miss Isabel,—ye know she's not so hearty as what Miss Maria does be. Then, you know, hersel' an, himsel' fighting is a sign it's married they will be."

"That's jist what I was thinking mysel', ma'am. Well, afther that, Mrs. M'Donogh, I fell asleep the second time, and I thought, mysel' and my little sisther was below at the river, wringing out the clothes, an' I felt something scrape my arm, an' I looked back, an' what should I see, but a little, small, white dog, with a collar about his neck. An' he kept scrapin', scrapin', even till I looked up, an', faith, there was a cat, a mighty ugly one, itsel', above in the three ; a small, miserable looking cratur, as ever you seen ! An' while I was lookin' at her, she turned into a cat as big as a horse; and she jumped off the three all of a suddent, and tuck the little dog, and began radlin' him. Well, ma'am, they fought, and tore each other to bits, an she finished by atin' him, intirely, all to his collar. An' she tuck that in her mouth, an' wint and scraped, scraped, even till she made a hole in the ground, an' put the collar in it,—and then I 'woke, for Winny gave a kick in the bed."

"That's a fine dhrame, too, Peggy ; the small, little, white dog is Mr. Barham ; an' the collar is a sign he has a fine fortune ; an' the scrapin' is a sign he's always talkin'. The cat in the three is Miss Maria ; an' lookin' miserable is a sign that she isn't so at all, Peggy. Dhrames, you know, always goes by conthraries. Well, then, her changing to be as big as a horse, is a sign she's to have a fine, large house, and a great dale of children."

"The Lord be praised !" cried Peggy.

"Well, Peggy, her throttling the little dog is a sign she'll have more sinse than him. An' ating him up alive, of coorse, is a sign it's man and wife they'll be."

"An' the collar, Mrs. M'Donogh, what does that mane, ma'am ?"

"Oh, the collar, Peggy, is a sign there will be no ind to the grandeur an' prosperity she's to live in. An', moreover, that she's to have the upper hand of him ;—for she tuck the collar off him, you remimber, Peggy ?"

"Musha, that it may be so !" ejaculated Peggy. "God sees and knows, Mrs. M'Donogh, there isn't a night nor morning I don't

pray for husbands for 'em both. Miss Isabel isn't so intirely *lauchy** a cratur as Miss Maria, but she's a mild, quiet, little cratur, never gives a sour look, nor cross word. The Lord purtect 'em both! Miss Maria more especially. What in the world's that they're screeching about there beyant, Barney Sullivan?"

"Pat Sullivan, Mr. M'Alpine's foster-brother, that's axing Miss Isabel to dance; and Misther M'Alpine's tinants are clapping her," replied Barney.

"M'Alpine and Wilmot for ever!" cried the M'Alpine followers; "high for Misther M'Alpine! high for Miss Wilmot!"

"Them tinants of Mr. M'Alpine are mighty impident, arn't they, ma'am?" questioned Peggy of her oracle, Mrs. M'Donogh. "You'd think, to hear 'em goin' on, their masther had nothing in the world to do, but jist to come coortin', and get for axin!"

"What matters what ignorant people of their description think at all?" replied Mrs. M'Donogh, shrugging her shoulders, as she cast a look at the yelling, hand-clapping M'Alpine's followers.

"What manner of breeding can the likes of them have, who has no experience of life? Hould your chat," said she angrily, to one at her side, who was roaring out for Miss "Isabel and Misther M'Alpine." "Hould your tongue—don't you see she don't like it?"

"She does like it," interrupted Pat, afraid of offending the M'Alpine consequence; "she likes it well, I promise you; only she's ashamed, because Mr. M'Alpine is by."

Mr. M'Alpine, though he seldom condescended to dance, thought that this occasion might prove one of the few exceptions to his general rule; and, to reward the fair Isabel for her graciousness, in dancing with his foster-brother, and to shew his sense of the compliment, thereby paid himself, he stood up and relieved his follower, an expression which means that he took the man's place in the dance, who, according to the usual etiquette, immediately sat down. The shouting and cries of "High for Miss Isabel! high for Misther M'Alpine!" redoubled, to his delight, and her annoyance, and to the gratification of the men, and infinite displeasure of the women of the Castle-Wilmot establishment. Winny, from her occasional attendance on Lord Warringdon's room, as well as on account of getting a compliment from him, now and then, on her rosy cheeks and blue eyes, when they accidentally met on the stairs, was on talking terms with the Viscount; hence she now addressed him thus:—"If I was a fine, cliver gintleman, I wouldn't let a nice young lady have such a yallow face as *that*, for a partner—glancing at Mr.

* In this sense, *gracious*.

M'Alpine—"when I'd have a good one of my own to put in its place," laughing, slyly, as she looked up at Lord Warringdon.

"Perhaps, she might be displeased, Winny," replied he, smiling at the compliment and insinuation it conveyed.

"Displeased, is it?" cried Winny. "Musha faith, an' she wouldn't; an' why would she? She has eyes in her head."

Lord Warringdon took the hint, and, imitating what he had seen others do, relieved Mr. M'Alpine, who looked waxing very indignant, thereupon; Isabel, however, did not;—her previous flush of vexation was immediately replaced by one of another expression.

The people regarded his Lordship's movement as a jest, permitted by the rules of the dance, to separate and disconcert the lovers; and a jest being always well received by the Irish people, particularly from a superior, his good humour in thus joining in the amusements of the evening, notwithstanding his fall in the morning, helped him on wonderfully as a candidate; and he was rewarded by shouts of laughter, and cries of "Warringdon for ever! success to him! high for the English Lord!"

"He's a fine, cliver gentleman," observed the M'Alpine servants; "I'd be glad the masther would vote for him; he has no pride nor concate about him at all."

"Thrue for ye!" cried Jim Naughten. "He's a ra'al gintleman, every inch of him. He made me a compliment of a five-pound note, for dhrivin' him up here; and though he thought (the crature) 'twas all my fault he stuck in the bog-hole, an' his bones broke a'most in comin' along, devil a word he said cross, or out of the way to me; and before he set out, breakin' his heart laughin' at one thing or other, jokin' with mysel', you'd think it was his born brother I was, faith you would. Pat Sullivan, I hope," he continued, turning to Peggy, and whispering, in order that Pat Sullivan might not overhear him, "I hope it's him she'll marry, an' not Misther M'Alpine, with his big, yallow teeth, an' poor, little, miserable, squeezed-up, starved carcass; like a weazel he is, for all the world, an' nothing but skin an' bone, no substance in him at all; the English Lord would make two of him, Peggy. By my conscience! if I was a young lady, I wouldn't look at him, itsel', let alone marrying him: and he's a great negur, as ever you seen, in his own house, Peggy."

"A-thin, is he, Jim? well to be sure, an' thim tinants of his, that does be braggin' so out of him, what a fine house he keeps, an' how he's like the masther, for all the world—evermore giving, giving."

"Oh, the liars of the world!" cried Jim; "like the masther, indeed! they must be the divils, intirely if they say that. The time I dhruv the officers' ladies there, you know, Peggy, an' that I smashed my pole, an' dhruv them without a tatther of a pole, good or bad; you remimber hearing tell of that, Peggy?"

"To be sure I did;—sure the whole counthry was talking of nothing else," replied Peggy.

"Ay!" said Jim, smiling with much self-complacency; "well, my dear, he wasn't plased because mysel' and my horses was stoppin' at the house, waitin' till I'd mend my pole. I heerd him axing Tom Lannigan, his body man, what I was doin' in it, so long. Like the masther, indeed! that, supposin' you war the divil out of hell, not to talk of a dacent boy, if you stopped in it a year, would think 'twas too soon you were goin' away—bad manners to themsel's an' their companions, the liars of the world! he's no more like the masther than I'm like the Lord Leftenant, Peggy."

CHAPTER XI.

Lady Anne and Maria were overwhelmed with business for some days, making preparations for the party—settling whom they must invite, and whom they need not—those they should ask to dinner, and those they could not possibly have room for—those to whom they should offer beds, and those whom they might leave to the care of their guardian angels on their return homewards, &c., &c. The party being given in honour of the candidate, it was, of course, necessary to invite the principal constituents of the county, unfortunately, many of the principal constituents of the county had nice pretty daughters, or sisters, or wives. How then was Lady Anne to reconcile attention to her guest's interest with her maternal anxiety for her daughters?

"I am sadly puzzled, Maria:" said she, "I *must* ask the men; and yet it don't always suit me to ask the women—I can't ask the men without the women, I am afraid?"

"Oh, yes, you can—whenever there are pretty girls you don't choose to ask, tell them you have no beds to offer, they will understand that perfectly—everybody knows it is easy to make up a barrack-room for the men—one can stow them any where, but that

one can't dispose so unceremoniously of ladies; at any rate one couldn't ask whole families in the lump, that way—one must make some selection when one has half a county to be civil to, and that being the case, you can easily manage to pick out the ugly or vulgar girl of a house—the compliment is equally felt by the family; the pretty sisters will be disappointed, to be sure, but the father and mother as well as herself, will be charmed with your kindness."

"Very true:" replied Lady Anne. "And we must ask the Catholic Bishop and O'Reilly, to dinner, to give Warringdon the better opportunity for conciliating them—*they* have no women, thank God."

"Don't forget the Colonel and Field-officers, and a few Captains or so, of the regiment—we want the band—and military men always set off a party so much:" observed Maria.

"Remember," said Lady Anne, "that we write to Kitty M'Alpine."

"Oh, by all means, she possesses, in perfection, the requisites for admittance; her brother in petticoats; ugly enough in all conscience:" laughed Maria.

"We may ask all the Lady Pembertons, I think, Maria."

"Oh, yes, all—it would take one a century to decide which was the least hideous."

"What shall we do about the Ryans? the girls are both exceedingly pretty."

"Yes, but they are also exceedingly vulgar:" answered Maria.

"Ah, very well, I forgot that. Now, about Eliza Fitzgerald. I am sadly annoyed. I can't possibly avoid having a bed for *her*. Mr. Fitzgerald, member for the county, and friend and colleague of your father; and yet *she* is a beautiful, accomplished, elegant-minded young woman."

"Yes, but she isn't fashionable—knows none of the people whom everybody who is somebody knows."

"Her figure, my dear Maria, is splendid—there she has decidedly the advantage over Isabel—in other points the attractions are balanced; her features are more regular, but the expression less engaging, than Isabel's. But her person—I repeat, impossible not to be struck by her."

"Granted," replied Maria, "but she's deep blue indigo. Do you imagine that all the beauty, accomplishments, and majesty on earth would atone in Warringdon's opinion, or, indeed, in that of any man, for the high crime and misdemeanour of reading Greek, and, what is worse, talking of it? By the way, you appear to me to give yourself an immensity of needless trouble, picking out ugly

girls for him—he would no more marry one of these pretty nobodies than he would fly."

"You don't call Miss Fitzgerald a nobody, my dear Maria."

"I don't call her a nobody *positively*, but relatively she is—nobody in town knows her—so she will be nobody to our Viscount. Besides, you ought to know by this time that it isn't quite so easy a matter to make young men fall in love with every pretty girl they see."

"I am not afraid of his falling in love with her—but I am alarmed lest his admiration be divirted from Isabel, by seeing beauty of another kind—the great thing is never to suffer a man to see what is capable of dividing his attention. Let Warringdon find Isabel superior to all around her, and he will fancy her superior to all he ever saw before. I see I'm making way with him, and to lose him now, after all the trouble I have been at, would be really dreadful. You are sure I need have no apprehensions about Eliza Fitzgerald?"

"None upon earth:" replied Maria.

Lady Anne still pondered.

"Well," said Maria, laughing, "not convinced yet?"

"Oh, yes, I am easy now; that is, about Isabel."

"What are you uneasy about then?"

"I was thinkink of you, my love."

"Of me! what about me?"

"Why, I was thinking," replied Lady Anne, "whether it were possible she could do you any harm, by interfering with Barham."

Maria again laughed—

"Lord, mamma, what a bugbear you make to yourself of Eliza Fitzgerald! the idea of her interfering with poor Barham—she, up in the clouds, hunting sublimity, and he in the kitchen, looking for fun! Why, she will talk to him about an Epic poem, and he will ask her for a droll story, and then they will fly off at a tangent."

"Perhaps so;" said Lady Anne, "my mind is now quite at ease. By the way, I think Barham begins to like you."

"Not he! he doesn't care a pin about me."

"He is always running after you, I know."

"Yes," replied Maria, "as he does after Father John, to be made laugh."

"He must be a sad bore to you, my dear Maria."

"Yes, I find this courting of mine *tant soit peu ennuyant*, but it can't be helped."

Invitations were dispatched all over the county, and great was

the commotion excited, and various were the reports circulated as to the precise motive whereon was founded the giving of this said ball. Some said it was an electioneering party—others said it was a marriage party—and a third group insisted that it was to unite both: that is, as a compliment to Lord Warringdon the candidate, and Mr. M'Alpine the son-in-law, at one and the same time. Vehicles of all descriptions were put in requisition, from the carriage-and-four down to the jaunting car; nay, some did not disdain even a common peasant's "car," for once in a way, to convey their daughters to a ball at "the Castle," and to a young rich wifeless English Lord; for the fact of his celibacy had spread like wild fire through the country.

"You must all put into the lottery, young ladies. Lord Warringdon is not married yet:" said Lady Anne, either *vivâ voce*, or by means of a pretty little billet, to all her prime favourites: to wit, all the cross-eyed, red-haired, *brogueaneering* young ladies of her acquaintance. So not a girl among them but rose the morning of the eventful day a Viscountess in anticipation.

And upon the said morning, Lady Anne sent all her gentlemen out to ride, immediately after breakfast, in order, as she informed them, to turn the house out of windows comfortably during their absence. The Viscount outstaid the rest of the party, and only returned in time to dress for dinner;—as soon as the last operation had been effected, he descended to the drawing-room, where he found a large party assembled—chiefly gentlemen; and among the number were two whose appearance struck him as being more courtly than any he had yet seen in the county of——. The elder, a dignified, intelligent-looking man, was standing at the window, talking to Mr. Wilmot, who listened to him with much deference. The younger was sitting near Isabel, speaking earnestly with her, while she appeared quite engrossed by his conversation; occasionally lowering her eyes and blushing, as he made some observations in a seemingly playful tone: and Lord Warringdon remarked that the blush was accompanied by a smile, and that the eyes were withdrawn only for a second, or two, and then raised up again to those of her companion. And his Lordship also observed that the eyes last alluded to were superb dark ones; and that their owner had brilliant teeth, and a very fine expression of countenance into the bargain.

"Devilish good looking fellow," he muttered; "perhaps this is the man she likes, and not me. If he be a lover (and what other liaison can there be between such a handsome man and such a pretty girl?)

he is certainly an accepted one ; his manner is so gay and secure,—hers so easy and confidential ;—that of both so good-humoured and friendly, nay, affectionate." And, as he cogitated thus, he bit his lips, and knit his brows, settling in his own mind that the elder gentleman was father to the younger.

Lord Warringdon had studied, unobserved by them, the two groups we have noticed ; in fact, his entrance into the room was not observed, until Lady Anne's keen eye discovered him, and drew her husband's attention to his noble guest.

"My love, you forget that this is the first time that Lord Warringdon and the Bishop have met."

"I beg ten thousand pardons, my dear Lord," said Wilmot, turning round, "I was so absorbed in politics here, that I did not perceive you; allow me to introduce my particular and valued friend, the Catholic Bishop of —— to your Lordship."

"*He* can't be the father, then," thought the Viscount, as he bowed his most gracious bow, and smiled his most insinuating, vote-asking smile.

"O'Reilly, where are you ?" cried Mr. Wilmot.

The handsome stranger advanced.

"My Lord, permit me to present to you another friend of mine, Mr. O'Reilly."

Lord Warringdon smiled and bowed, less graciously, however, than on the former occasion; and he observed that the stranger looked over at Isabel, and smiled also, and that she returned his smile, slightly colouring.

"If you have any friends at Rome, my Lord," said Mr. Wilmot, "Mr. O'Reilly can, perhaps, give you intelligence of them; he is just returned from the imperial city, laden with music, poetry, painting, cameos, and enthusiasm."

"And good nature, I beg you will add," interrupted O'Reilly, "for permiting you to laugh at me thus, without quarrelling with you."

Lord Warringdon had not much leisure for indulging in speculations concerning Mr. O'Reilly, as he was obliged to play the amiable to the "good interests" scattered in groups round the room. He had to laugh and chat with those he already knew ;—bow and smile to, and compliment those whom he saw for the first time, such as Lord and Lady Templemore, and the five Lady Pembertons, Mr. and Miss Fitzgerald, and the Colonel of the regiment ; "that he might not be extreme to mark what was done amiss" in the rioting way, when, with heads full of whiskey and hands of shillelahs, the

freeholders of the county should rush to the onslaught, to decide whether Lord Warringdon or Mr. Archer were the most fitting man to represent them.

At length dinner was announced. Lord Templemore handed down Lady Anne: Mr. Wilmot gave his arm to Lady Templemore, and Lord Warringdon, just as he was looking about for Isabel, was requested by Lady Anne to take care of Lady Mary Pemberton. Mr. M'Alpine offered his arm to Isabel, but Lord W. remarked that she affected not to see it, and, unasked, placed her arm within O'Reilly's. At table the Viscount was flanked on the one side by the Bishop, on the other by Lady Mary; just opposite to him was Isabel, between Mr. M'Alpine and Mr. O'Reilly: she was in her best looks, all grace and animation, laughing and chattering with O'Reilly.

"The confounded little flirt," muttered his Lordship, between his teeth, as he turned round to see if he could not employ his time as agreeably with his companion as she was doing with hers. Of this Lady he had had but an imperfect glimpse in the drawing-room, so he was but ill prepared for what he now saw in the full blaze of light, viz., a pale, cross-eyed, white-haired girl, with a neck rivaling in length that of the far-famed giraffe of the *Jardin-des-Plantes*.

"Devilishly impertinent of Lady Anne to place me near such a scarecrow as this." He surveyed the table;—there was not a face, within view, worth looking at, except Isabel's; the female party, being, in fact, almost made up of married women, only three girls among them: namely, the flirting Isabel, right opposite to him, as has been mentioned; Lady Mary Pemberton, close at his side, too ugly for him even to take wine with; and Miss Fitzgerald, who, sitting at a distance, at his side of the table, he could not see at all.

His Lordship felt and looked much disconcerted; and his ill-humour was not a little increased by having, more than once, detected a scrutinizing glance of O'Reilly's provokingly fine eyes directed at himself; after each of which critical regards, Mr. O'Reilly would turn and say something in a low voice to Isabel, and Isabel would blush, and he would laugh gaily: and, added to all this, his Lordship's audacious, yet sportive, analyzer would again smile across the table, into his Lordship's very eyes, and, in a kind of triumph, as it were, insupportable to his vanity.

"Curse him and her, too!" muttered the Viscount: "the artful little devil: I always heard that Irish women were the most confounded flirts upon earth; and, judging by Miss Isabel Wilmot, I am

certain it is a true saying: the idea of making *me* a *pis aller*,—somebody to flirt with, just to keep her hand in, when nobody she liked better was here! and to be so near caught by her apparently guileless, unsophisticated character, and devoted affection! It was God's mercy I did not, in some moment of weakness, make some foolish speech I could afterwards have cut my tongue out for having made. She is telling him a pack of lies this moment, I dare say, about my admiration of her; and making prodigious sport with him, for having continued constant; but I'll spoil her game, that she may depend on: I'll not ask her to dance, even, I am determined. Confound her, again! I never saw such a piece of deceit in all my life."

The Catholic Bishop had to repeat an observation twice to this candidate for one of the most Catholic counties in Ireland, so completely was the politician absorbed in the man.

He, the dangerous Warringdon! for whose attentions the loveliest and most fashionable were contending, to be placed by a gawky fright, nobody knew; and the beauty of the company sitting opposite; her whole heart, tongue and eyes engrossed by another! It was an insult not to be borne!

"Have you secured Mr. M'Alpine's interest, my Lord?" enquired the Bishop, for the third time.

"Oh, yes; he and Lady Anne intend this; he shall marry her,—but—"

"I beg your pardon, my Lord," interrupted the Bishop, smiling, "that is not an answer to my question: I was not asking whether Mr. M'Alpine intended bestowing himself on Miss Wilmot, but whether he intended bestowing his votes on your Lordship."

"A thousand pardons, my Lord, I misunderstood," returned the Viscount, colouring with indignation against himself, for the unconscious and unintentional proof he had just given of the engrossment of his thoughts.

"No:—I have repeatedly sounded Mr. M'Alpine, but have never yet been able to elicit any thing specific in the way of a promise. Lady Anne tells me, however, that he expresses himself to her favourably towards me; and that he approves my line of politics; and he throws to me, himself, hints about two brothers, three brothers-in-law, and half-a-dozen cousins in want of places, sinecures, if possible! and I promise to storm the treasury for them. But still, some way or other, I can't bring him to the point."

"No; I dare say not," returned the Bishop; "Mr. M'Alpine is a sad, slippery gentlemen, in canvassing the county, I am sorry to tell you. His vanity as well as his interest will prevent his declaring him-

self till the very day of the election; for, besides making better terms for his votes, he will shew that, whatever side he throws his interest into will kick the beam, and he will have the credit, as well as profit, of being the casting voice. Mr. Wilmot could tell your Lordship curious stories about him. He has always had more trouble with the M'Alpine interest than the whole county put together."

"What do you say, my Lord, with regard to a contest?" asked Lord Warringdon. "I was led, at first, to suppose there would be none; but, within the last week, I hear that Mr. Archer is determined to stand; for that he has married an English wife, and no longer wants the sinews of war."

"That is all true," observed the Bishop; "but money cannot, in this county, supply the want of interest: we take an equivalent for our votes, indeed, but we don't exactly sell them for hard cash. Now, Mr. Archer stands almost exclusively, as you are, of course, aware, on the Orange interest; an interest you also know, which, in this county, is in the ratio of one to a hundred. I understand he has been coaxing Mr. M'Alpine, but has not, as yet, obtained a promise of marriage, no more than your Lordship; and, unless backed by him, he cannot come to the poll; he has not even ground to stand upon."

Here the Bishop's voice was drowned by a peal of laughter from one of the side tables, at which Maria presided, and around which she had collected a band of choice spirits, composed of young men who had good interests, young ladies, anxious to stand well with young men of good interests, and a few officers reported to be sons of men of fortune.

Cries of "Capital! Bravo! Miss Wilmot, upon my soul, I never heard a better thing! you are a larking girl! you are a knowing one!" were vociferated amidst shouts of laughter, to which, however, Mr. Barham did not lend a note; and gentle tittering, accompanied exclamations of, "How droll! how pleasant Miss Wilmot is!" proved satisfactorily to the company that Miss Wilmot's wit, though so noisily applauded by the gentlemen, nevertheless, was not of a description to shock the ladies of the party.

We would fain hope that our gentle reader takes sufficient interest in our fun-hunting friend, Mr. Barham, to regret his absence from the laughing band, and to have felt both regret and surprise at a fact so inconsistent with the above-mentioned gentleman's usual line of conduct. Nor do we hesitate to doubt that our said gentle reader is busy in conjectures as to the why and wherefore of this

extraordinary circumstance. "Has the poor young man met an untimely end? tumbled over a precipice, or tumbled into a boghole? has he fallen a victim to the typhus, (cholera was not then in vogue,) or to a fit of laughter? In a word, what has become of him? something must have occurred. He never surely would voluntarily have quitted the festivities of Castle Wilmot; and if at Castle Wilmot, he would as surely have made one at the merry side-table party." In this manner do we imagine our reader to cogitate—and we feel considerable pleasure in being able to relieve his mind of all anxiety concerning our good-natured friend. He has been neither "clifted nor bogged," neither dead of typhus fever, nor of laughing. He is at Castle Wilmot, although not one of the side-table party—and the only reason he is not there is that he is somewhere else—to wit, at the principal table, seated, by Lady Anne's arrangement, near Miss Fitzgerald. "Nothing like contrast, thought her Ladyship—and her Ladyship thought right, "he will relish Maria's funny stories more than ever after Miss Fitzgerald's aphorisms." With peals of laughter, ringing in his ears, this votary of fun was, therefore, doomed, sore against his will, to listen to the voice of wisdom from the ruby lips of the fair Eliza. Understanding from Lady Anne that Mr. Barham was a young man of fortune, fresh from the university, Miss Fitzgerald, having associated, it appears, very little with young gentlemen from college, imagined she should have a delightful chat on classical literature with Mr. Barham, and receive some learned elucidations of passages which had puzzled her.

"Pray, may I ask," she said, in the sweetest of sweet brogues imaginable, "may I ask you, Mr. Barham, whether you consider Bloomfield's edition of Æschylus a good one, or whether you would recommend any other?"

"Oh, I'm sure I don't know," replied Barham. "I think one edition is just as good as another; I never could see any difference for my part."

"Perhaps not in the text, but with respect to the commentaries; you surely find some of them much clear, fuller, and more satisfactory than others?"

"I declare I don't know whether they are or not, for I never read any:" he replied.

"Of course, you would not require the same explanations that I should, but still there are so many difficulties arising from allusions to national customs, and expressions, and political events, the influence of which, being confined within narrow limits, although at

a former time of local importance, have not fallen under the notice of the Historian ;—and these points would be obscure to the most perfect classical scholar.—How much we are indebted to the scholiasts ! but for those learned men, how little of the ancient literature would have descended to posterity !—Oh ! long ago, the greater part of it must have been consigned to oblivion !"

"You are quite right, Miss Fitzgerald ; I wish to Heaven it had," cried Barham, who had heard only the last sentence of the foregoing speech ; his attention during the first part of the harangue having been engaged in conjecturing what funny story Miss Wilmot could be telling.

"You are quite right ; I should be devilish glad, I assure you, that every Greek and Latin book in the world had been lost long ago,—stoopid pack of trash !"

Miss Fitzgerald opened her fine eyes in amazement.

"Oh, Miss Fitzgerald, you are Irish. Will you do me a great favour ?"

"If it is in my power," politely answered the young lady; though not now hoping, as some minutes before she had done, that the favour asked would be a request to be permitted to look at her Italian translation of Xenophon's defence of Socrates ; a morceau of which every body acquainted with the Fitzgerald family had heard ;—and as the Fitzgerald family included half the county, Miss Fitzgerald thought it included half the world.

Mr. Barham might, however, entreat her to favour him with a little music by and by ;—he had heard, doubtless, of her proficiency as a pianiste.

"What is this favour, Mr. Barham ?" said she.

"Oh ! that you would tell me some droll story to make me laugh, like Miss Wilmot,—will you ? I should be so much obliged to you !—They shan't have all the laughing to themselves at the other table, shall they ?"

Miss Fitzgerald was absolutely petrified, she, the best pianoforte player ; the best French and Italian, and the only Greek scholar in the county ; to be asked to tell funny stories, to make people laugh !

"I never tell funny stories, Mr. Barham," she replied, giving him a look that would have done honour to Minerva herself, so fraught was it with wisdom and indignation.

"Oh, don't you ?" he ran on—"What a pity !—I took into my head, some how, that you were quite an Irish girl ;—never having been out of Ireland, as Lady Anne told me ;—so I made sure I should find you as funny again as Miss Wilmot."

Now, we are told comparisons are always odious, but of all comparisons those between ladies are the most odious,—and if there be such a thing as the superlative of a superlative, the comparison just made was, to the person addressed, the most odious of the most odious. The greatest insult, in fact, that could be offered to Eliza Fitzgerald was to compare her with Maria Wilmot, whom she envied for her popularity, though she despised the means by which she had attained it; disapproving, at the same time, her conduct, and resenting her ridicule.

"What a senseless, tasteless, insane young man!" thought Miss Fitzgerald.

"What a stoopid girl she is, to be sure!" muttered Mr. Barham, as he turned from side to side, and leaned back in his chair, in imminent danger of dislocating the dorsal vertebræ, so great was his eagerness to catch a word of what was going forward at the side table. The conversation between this well-matched pair began to flag, and soon ceased altogether.

Shortly after, the ladies withdrew, to the infinite delight of the gentlemen, and to their shame be it spoken.

For some time after, the candidate drank, and laughed, and listened to stories, "capital stories;" did all in his power to appear a right good fellow. As soon, however, as he could do so, with propriety and due attention to his reputation, he effected his escape to the drawing-room; the Bishop and Mr. O'Reilly, he perceived, having previously made their retreat.

Loud peals of laughter pursued him almost to the drawing-room door; but, just as he was about to enter it, sounds of a different nature met his ear, that is to say, the soft, clear notes of a female voice, supported and strengthened by the mellow tones of a deep, rich tenor, modulated into the most exquisite harmony.

Who can these be?" thought he. He went in, and saw that the singers were Isabel Wilmot and her admirer, Mr. O'Reilly.

Now, strange as it may appear, it was the first time he had ever heard Isabel sing. Her mother, aware how much the impression, in those cases, depends upon surprise and effect, had always discovered that her daughter had a cold, or was out of voice, whenever his Lordship proposed music: and, by these means, she accomplished two desirable objects; first, the augmentation of his curiosity; second, a proof of her total indifference about shewing off her daughter to him.

Lord Warringdon had a good deal of factitious feeling, of that morbid excitability of temperament which would bring tears to his

eyes at a finely-executed air by Pasta, though he might hear, unmoved, of the death of a friend; on the present occassion, so pleased and touched was he by the singers that he momentarily forgot the sins of the individuals.

"Bravo, bravo! Signora! Bravo, Signor!" he cried.

"Ha!" exclaimed Isabel, with pleased surprise; "'tis you, my Lord? you have left the dining-room early."

"And should have come away much earlier had I the least idea I should have heard such music. Why did you not give me a hint, Mr. O'Reilly, and bring me with you? I have frequently petitioned Miss Isabel Wilmot to sing, but never could prevail on her, however, to do so; but if I had once got in, she could not well turn me out; and then I might have had the benefit of her desire to oblige you," said he, in a cold, offended tone.

"Is this a true bill, Signora Isabel?" demanded Mr. O'Reilly. "Has Lord Warringdon asked you to sing, and have you been churl enough to refuse?"

Here Lady Anne touched Lord Warringdon's arm:—"Just look at M'Alpine!"

"What for?" asked his Lordship, rather ill-humouredly.

"See how proud he looks, poor fellow, of Isabel's performance! She always sings so well with O'Reilly."

"I dare say she does," assented the Viscount, significantly.

"Isabel, my love," said her mother, "look out another duet, quick before the crowd pours in. O'Reilly, you know, don't like singing in general company:" then, lowering her voice, "sing the air M'Alpine likes so much;—he is quite delighted with you this evening, I can tell you."

Lord Warringdon overheard this, and observed O'Reilly smile, as he whispered Isabel, who appeared to hesitate.

"I was just going to sing something Lord Warringdon asked me for," she said timidly.

"Do as I desire you, my dear," rejoined her mother, in an affectionately peremptory tone.

Mr. M'Alpine now placed himself in his usual position, when listening to the lady of his love: that is, stretched across the instrument, staring her full in the face, and beating time out of time.

"How that poor girl is persecuted!" observed O'Reilly, in a commiserating tone, to Lord Warringdon, glancing at M'Alpine.

"How do you know the lady considers it persecution?" asked the Viscount, coldly; "unless Miss Wilmot be an exception to her sex, she will not consider admiration as persecution."

"Recollect that admiration, in this case, is coupled with the pretensions of a suitor," said O'Reilly.

"I don't see how that should make the admiration less acceptable;—I always understood the grand object of young ladies was to convert their suitors into husbands."

"Yes," replied O'Reilly, "when they don't happen to like somebody else."

"And pray, who may the happy man be, who is favoured by Miss Isabel Wilmot's attachment?" said the Viscount, sarcastically.

O'Reilly smiled. "Oh, that's a secre, my Lord, I can never reveal till the lady gives me permission."

Lord Warringdon repaid him with one of his searching looks.

O'Reilly hummed a few bars of an old Venetian Barcarolle.

"What a cursed puppy!" thought the noble Viscount; "and the mother such a blind buzzard as not to perceive what is going on between him and her coquette of a daughter."

"Isabel, my love," cried Lady Anne, "let O'Reilly hear your harp once more; it used to be his favourite instrument."

Though the harp was close to the sofa upon which my Lord was lounging, biting his lips, he never rose to carry it towards its beautiful owner, and the lady and her harp might both have tumbled down, for any thing he cared, in his present mood. "A more impertinent woman than that Lady Anne I never met; if I was a married man, or a half-pay officer, she could not have treated me with more perfect indifference,—more downright disrespect, than she has done, ever since I came into her house; she has not even let her daughter play, or sing, for me! upon my word, not a mother Duchess in England would presume to treat me thus!"

While he was thus wrathfully ruminating, his attention, spite of himself, was arrested by Isabel's playing. Her execution was not remarkable for rapidity, but her touch was beautiful, so full and round, yet soft, clear and bell-like. Then her style was charged with sentiment and delivery, and her expression exquisite, rendered more touching even than usual, by her anxiety to *interest one* in that room whom she perceived, for some cause or other she could not divine, was displeased with her.

The appeal was not made in vain. As we have before said, Lord Warringdon had a good deal of musical feeling. He listened for some time in admiration of the performance, without, however, deigning to look at the performer. At length, he suffered his eyes to rest on the fair musician.

Now, Isabel Wilmot had a very pretty little foot, and a singu-

larly beautiful hand and arm; and the fall of her shoulders was always considered peculiarly graceful; for all these good reasons her mother had selected the harp, as her instrument; and, for the same good reasons, Lord Warringdon thought, as he now gazed on her, that Lady Anne had evinced much judgment in her selection. "A man might love such a creature as that," said he to himself, "if she were not such a confounded little flirt!"

"Carriages were heard rolling round to the entrance, and a general movement took place, which disturbed the current of his Lordship's thoughts, or probably, he might have ended, by perfectly reconciling himself to the fair Isabel, and have been induced, even contrary to his determination, to open the ball with her.

As soon as the music struck up, Mr. Barham and all the young officers, and as many of the country gentlemen as had heads in dancing condition, made their appearance in the drawing-room.

"Oh, Miss Wilmot, such fun as I have had!" said Mr. Barham, holding his sides, "ready to die;" "such fun! Mr. Malony has just knocked me down."

"Knocked you down! why, how did it happen?"

"Oh, not in earnest, you know; he was just shewing me how he knocked down Mr. M'Alpine, one day, and he fetched me such a thump on my shoulder, that I fell under the table! ah, I laughed so, I thought I should have died! so Irish!"

"You are not hurt, then?" observed Maria.

"No, only a little stiff, but dancing will set me to rights, immediately. Are you engaged this quadrille, Miss Wilmot?"

Maria informed him that she was.

"How tiresome! well, will you introduce me to a partner, then? a funny one, you know."

"I think," observed Maria, "that you ought to dance with Miss Fitzgerald, as you sat near her at dinner."

Barham recoiled in horror—"Oh, not if you were to give me a thousand pounds, Miss Wilmot!"

"Upon my word, I pity you much:" Maria said laughing: "Why, Miss Fitzgerald is the beauty, as well as the genius, of the county. She reads Greek, and writes poetry, you must know."

"I don't care whether she does or no:" he replied, rather doggedly—"I got enough of her at dinner, I can tell you. What do you say to her talking all the time about Greek, and Latin; and when I asked her for a funny story, she stared at me as if I had a hundred heads! Disagreeable girl! I would sooner not dance all night, than dance with her. What laughing you had, all of you,

at the other table! How I did wish to be among you! you will not forget to tell me what it was all about to-morrow? Oh! Miss Wilmot, make haste and introduce me to some funny girl or other, for the quadrille is already beginning."

"Will you have one of the Miss O'Higgertys?"

"Oh, yes! that's such a nice Irish name! I'm sure I should like one of them."

Maria led him up to the eldest Miss O'Higgerty; daughter to the well-known attorney of that name, who, together with his family, were invited ostensibly to secure his services at the approaching election, to Lord Warringdon, but those intimately acquainted with the Wilmots were aware that the fact of Mr. O'Higgerty having some heavy untaxed bills of costs against the Castle Wilmot estate had a considerable share in obtaining for himself and his four bouncing, red-cheeked daughters, admittance among the "tip-top grandees" of the county.

"I don't like quadrilles and waltzes, at all;" observed Mr. Barham to his partner, "but Miss Wilmot has promised to let us dance jigs by-and-by. That will be much pleasanter, will it not?"

"Jigs!" echoed the young lady, with a look of consternation. "How could Miss Wilmot think of such a thing? The idaa! for God's sake, who ever heard of dancing jigs in company?"

"A jig!" cried one—"a jig!" repeated another—and "jig! jig! jig!" ran round the room, in all imaginable varieties of tone and accent, expressive of amazement.

"So you should not like to dance a jig?" continued Mr. Barham. "I wonder at that—I should have thought you just the girl to enjoy it! such a regular Irish name! and such a capital brogue and all!"

The young lady answered with some little warmth—"What an idaa you must have of Ireland, Mr. Barham! Good Irish society, you know, is just the same as English—no difference in life—I hope you don't form so unfavourable an idaa of us as to imagine you would see anything in good society in Ireland different from what you would see in England?"

"Well, I declare, I can't understand that at all;" replied Mr. Barham. "If I were an Irishman, I should always be trying to be as Irish as possible. I would dress, and dance, and talk, and walk, and eat, and drink, and live differently from everybody else in the world, so that the moment I came into a room, people would say, 'I'm sure that gentleman must be Irish. I would just go on the way they do in a play. I would be always swearing, and saying funny things, and fighting duels, and running in debt, and, in fact,

doing all sorts of out of the way things. My goodness! what's the use of being Irish, if one does just the same as if one was English? so very stoopid that would be!"

"I don't think gentility can ever be stupid;" Miss O'Higgerty replied, with a toss of her head—"at laste, according to *my* idaas. God forbid I'd ever see the day that Irish ladies and gentlemen would be different from other ladies and gentlemen—God forbid I'd ever see them put themselves upon an aquality with the peasantry of the country, and dance jigs! There's rason in everything, Mr. Barham."

Now, all this time Mr. Barham had not been listening to a single word that she was saying; his whole attention having been absorbed watching Maria Wilmot and her partner, (who happened to be his *vis à vis*,) as they talked and laughed together, and he was very sinfully envying their gaiety, and puzzling his poor brains in conjecture as to what it was all about.

Lord Warringdon, much to his surprise, during the evening had not observed, among the dancers, the gay admirer of his admired Isabel. Yet he could not have been flirting with her, for she had danced every set. What could have become of him?

The Viscount strolled into the card-room, and there he found Mr. O'Reilly and Lady Anne, talking so earnestly, that he had come close enough to distinguish his own name, pronounced in a laughing tone, by Mr. O'Reilly, before either of them was aware of his approach.

Lady Anne rose. "Can you tell me, my Lord, whom Isabel is dancing with?"

"I really did not happen to observe:" he carelessly replied.

For once in his life, at least, the young gentleman did not tell the truth. He knew perfectly well, not only who Isabel was then dancing with, but had observed who had been her partners throughout the evening. Neither had he failed to remark that she had danced languidly. "Because," thought he, "O'Reilly is not near her."

"How comes it, Mr. O'Reilly, that you are not dancing this evening?" Lord Warringdon said, as they now stood together, looking on at a whist party.

"I never dance, my Lord."

"You do not like it?"

"Yes, I liked it, when a boy."

"It is not your years, however, that need prevent you now, I should imagine?" said the Viscount, smiling.

"No, not exactly my years; but it is not usual for men of my profession, at any age to dance."

"A young barrister, I suppose:" thought Lord Warringdon. "I was not aware, Mr. O'Reilly, that the Irish bar was under such absurd shackles of "*convenances?*"

"Nor are they, I imagine:" Mr. O'Reilly replied.

"Except in proscribing waltzes and quadrilles," the Viscount answered.

"You have been misinformed in that respect, my Lord. Barristers may waltz all night, if they please, provided they gain their client's cause in the morning; perhaps, even they have a better chance of persuading twelve sober, steady men out of their senses, from having the evening before succeeded in making fools of a dozen or two of pretty girls."

"Why do you not try its efficacy yourself then?" the Viscount asked.

"I would if the causes *I* had to plead, my Lord, were of a nature to be assisted by talking nonsense to young ladies."

"Oh, I see! you are a sober chancery lawyer?"

Mr. O'Reilly looked surprised.

"I thought that your Lordship was aware of my profession—I am a Roman Catholic clergyman."

"You!" Lord Warringdon exclaimed, looking in his turn astonished, and not a little pleased also—"You! a Catholic priest! I never should have thought so."

"No? Is my appearance then so very unclerical, my Lord?" Mr. O'Reilly enquired, smilingly.

"Humph! I don't exactly know how to answer that question. A man need not certainly be a worse priest for happening at the same time to be a good-looking fellow; and singing as if he were in the land of song; and talking to pretty girls; but someway, if I were a Catholic husband,'I should rather mywife had any other confessor."

"O'Reilly coloured and answered gravely—"If you *were* a Catholic husband, my Lord, you would know better, I hope, than you seem to do at present what are, and what are not, the qualifications to be avoided in a confessor—and whether Catholic, or Protestant, I hope you may never marry a woman you might not trust with a person more dangerous than myself, even if I were a mere man of the world. But I should think, my Lord, that you need not fear any rival," he added, politely.

The Viscount bowed, and smiled; and after a short pause, resumed the conversation.

"Do you know, that I imagined, you were the accepted lover of the young lady you sat next at dinner to-day."

"Excellent! Oh, come, I shall tell her that directly," said O'Reilly, laughing. "Well, certainly I must have played my *rôle* of confidante to perfection, since I appeared so interested, and sympathizing, as to be taken for the lover himself!"

"But who is this lover?" the Viscount enquired.

Mr. O'Reilly gave him one of those scrutinizing looks which had so much provoked his Lordship during the former part of the day.

"Is it anybody I know?" Lord Warringdon continued.

"You may *think* that you know him, my Lord. But, come, come, you must not tamper with the secrets of the confessional, you know—besides, I want to see this fair mistress of mine."

Lord Warringdon took O'Reilly's arm, and they returned together to the ball-room.

Isabel was making the tour of the apartments with her partner, on whom, however, she appeared to bestow less than her usual attention, whilst he, on his part, was all assiduity. Lord Warringdon remarked that Isabel frequently looked uneasily around her, as if in search of somebody, and when, at length their eyes met, that hers were instantly withdrawn, and that turning to the young officer, her late partner, (who was, by the way, eldest son of an English baronet, of very large fortune, in the north of England,) she talked, and laughed, and did all in her power to evince perfect indifference to his approach, and although she saw him elbowing his way to her, followed by O'Reilly, never condescended to look at, or smile upon him.

"Will you dance the next quadrille with me?" the Viscount said, in his softest tone, and with his sweetest smile.

"I regret that I am engaged for the whole evening, my lord," she replied, with a graceful, haughty movement of her pretty head, which Lord Warringdon thought quite bewitching, her displeasure arising, as he saw clearly, from pique at his previous inattention.

"She has spirit, I see, as well as tenderness," said the Viscount to himself—and he liked her the better. He would soon have tired of an affection that could not have been piqued. He, therefore, felt, as well as looked, disappointed at Isabel's answer.

"You are not engaged for the whole evening, surely?" he said in a low, gentle voice. "You must dance once, at least, with me, or I shall think that I have had the misfortune to offend you; and *that* would give me real concern."

He looked so sorry, and so handsome, that it was quite impossible for Isabel to keep up her dignity any longer.

"If you are disengaged then for the eighth quadrille, my Lord, I shall be very happy to dance it with you;" trying to repeat these words, of course, as if they were but words of course to her.

"I cannot but admire the composure with which you dispose of yourself, without asking my consent," said O'Reilly, with mock gravity.

"Your consent!" repeated Isabel; "pray, why should I ask your consent? I am not one of your flock, am I?"

"Not one of my flock, indeed! don't you know that I have even higher authority over you than that of a priest, or confessor—that is to say, the authority of an affianced husband?"

"What on earth are you talking about?" Isabel asked, with surprise.

"And how is it possible, Miss Isabel Wilmot, that *you* can have the face to deny that I am your lover, the secret and favoured rival of mamma's knight of the castle? you need not mind *le beau Vicomte* here—for he knows all about it—in fact, he was the first to discover our attachment—so acknowledge the truth at once, and I dare say he will use his influence in our behalf, and induce mamma to consent to our union? Come, my gentle, blushing, Isabel, *spake* to our friend." And he imitated the tone and look of Mr. M'Alpine so perfectly that, notwithstanding Isabel's embarrassment at some of the allusions in Mr. O'Reilly's speech, she joined in Lord Warringdon's laugh. But though somewhat confused, she was also made very happy by this same speech, finding in it a clue to her lover's sudden change of manner towards her.

Lady Anne joined the group.

"My Lord, if you are not engaged this set, I wish you would allow me to introduce you to a young lady."

"My dear Lady Anne, what else have you been wishing, and doing, all night, than inflicting young ladies upon me? By the way, a more diabolically hideous set of young ladies I never had the felicity to encounter. I really must sit this quadrille, or I shall die, and, moreover, have to lay my death at your door. Only think, how it will figure in the *Morning Post*—'On the 25th of this month, died at Castle Wilmot, in the county of ——— Viscount Warringdon, eldest son of Earl Glenville, of a surfeit of ugly partners.'"

"Oh, come, nonsense," Lady Anne said, laughing, and walking him away. "What does it signify about the daughters' looks, if

you get the fathers' votes? I think it a cheap purchase, for my part."

"You do? I have not, then, the honour of agreeing with you. But do tell me how it happens that your women are not prettier in this part of Ireland? The men, most of them, are very fine looking fellows, and have a good, dashing air about them, but the women are plain, and—"

"Come, come, you must not be so ungallant. At any rate, you shall not this time, have to complain of the want of attraction in your partner, for I am going to introduce you to Miss Fitzgerald, the most beautiful girl in our county."

"Not while your daughter remains in it."

"Oh, Isabel cannot be termed beautiful;—she is an elegant, interesting girl, but that is all; whereas, Miss Fitzgerald's face and figure are faultless. But, however, many agree with you, in preferring Isabel. Do you know, I never could account for the extraordinary admiration she has excited, for I really and unaffectedly have always considered her overrated. Then, again, Miss Fitzgerald has much more acquirement than Isabel,—she speaks seven languages,—my daughter only knows French and Italian."

"And abundance, my dear Lady Anne, for any woman to know. French for the ball-room,—Italian for the *boudoir*. I shall bring in a bill into this new parliament to make it felony, without benefit of clergy, for a lady to learn more. These young ladies, of seven-language power, are absolute inflictions."

"She is an admirable classical scholar, too."

"Angels and ministers of grace defend me!" the Viscount exclaimed, throwing himself into an attitude. "I'll empty all these veins, and shed my dear blood, drop by drop, to please or serve you, but this I cannot, dare not do."

"You ridiculous creature," interrupted Lady Anne, laughing. "Come on,—oh, you must, indeed, or neither she nor her father will ever forgive you."

"Necessity has no law," he said, shrugging his shoulders.

He assumed, however, his most insinuating smile, when he asked the favour of dancing the next quadrille with Miss Fitzgerald.

Now, this young lady was, indeed, not only a profound classical scholar, and admirable pianoforte player, but she was also an enlightened politician, and this branch of her knowledge she now brought forward for the special entertainment and edification of the new candidate, who, however, unfortunately happened to dislike politics as much as Mr. Barham did Greek. All the European

governments, in succession, underwent her critical examination, in the intervals of "*avant deux*" and "*chassez croisez.*"

"What a handsome bore that woman is!" said the Viscount to himself, as he resigned the learned Eliza to her new partner.

At length the seven quadrilles, which stood between Isabel and Lord Warringdon's, were got through, and he had just come to claim her, when Lady Anne stepped up to them.

"Oh, my Lord, I want to introduce you to Miss M'Alpine."

"Impossible, my dear Lady Anne, I am already engaged."

"To whom, may I ask?"

"To Miss Isabel Wilmot."

"Oh, what does that signify?—Isabel can easily find another partner, and she will equally give you credit, for your good intention in her favour. You don't, I suppose, want to make a conquest of her," she added, laughing.

Lord Warringdon felt the hand on his arm slightly tremble, as Lady Anne thus seemed so quietly to take for granted their utter indifference to one another. Instinctively he pressed the little soft hand, as he replaced it on his arm.

"Oh, really, Lady Anne, you must excuse me this time."

"And, oh, really, Lord Warringdon, I can do no such thing," she answered playfully. "Come away, my dear Isabel, we must not give this lazy candidate of ours any excuse," and she drew her daughter's arm within hers, and walked her off.

"Was there ever such a provoking, persecuting marplot?" the Viscount muttered, as he made his bow to Miss M'Alpine.

The band struck up a waltz, he deposited his hideous one on the first vacant seat, and looked round for Isabel—whom he discovered at last, Mr. M'Alpine sitting near her and laughing, as was his custom, on three chairs at once, and rolling his large unmeaning eyes; and just as he was apologising to her, for not asking her to waltz, being "afraid," as he said, of "throwing her down," (the usual finale of his waltzing enterprises,) and as she was smiling forgiveness, Lord Warringdon walked up to them:

"You waltz, do you not?" he asked.

She nodded.

"Let us be off then, before *la cheré maman* makes a re-appearance with a new fright in her hands—one would think all the hideousness of the county had rendezvoused here to-night—come, *la bellina carina flirtina;*" he said, playfully putting his arm round her waist.

The whole room was in admiration of the graceful movements of

this handsome couple, and none more so than Lady Anne herself, although when they paused a moment to take breath, she asked her daughter in a displeased tone—

"Why are you not dancing with Mr. M'Alpine, my dear?"

"Because, mamma, Mr. M'Alpine never waltzes, you know."

"*Allons donc*," said the Viscount, replacing his arm. But Isabel hesitated, for she saw that her mother was offended.

"Why what is the matter? are you tired?" he asked.

"No;" answered Isabel, colouring. "But mamma does not wish me to waltz."

"Oh, I beg pardon—I was not aware of your mamma's objection to it, or of course I should not have asked you."

Lady Anne continued to bite her lips and play with her fan. Isabel sat down and turned her back on Mr. M'Alpine, and Lord Warringdon turned his on Lady Anne.

"Confound the woman!" he muttered, as he folded his arms, and stretched out his legs.

"I thought you were going to waltz, my Lord?" Lady Anne observed, in her sweetest and most guileless manner.

"I was, but your Ladyship prevented me:" he answered.

"There are plenty of *valseuses* in the room, besides my daughter; for instance, Miss M'Clintock, who waltzes beautifully—shall I introduce you?"

Now, Miss M'Clintock had a pair of staring light blue eyes, by no means to the taste of his young Lordship, so he met the offer rather coldly.

"I am much obliged to your Ladyship, but I have changed my mind, and do not intend waltzing all the evening."

"As you please, my Lord;" she replied, with offended dignity.

"Mr. M'Alpine! will you have the kindness to give your arm to Isabel as far as the next room, for I am sadly afraid of her taking cold here."

Poor Isabel was ready to cry from vexation, but how soon would her tears have been converted into smiles, could she have seen the glance of indignation, and offended pride which the Viscount darted at her mother!

During the remainder of the evening, he scarcely condescended even to speak with his hostess, who, in consequence, retired to rest that night, full of the most joyful, and brilliant anticipations. O'Reilly had mentioned to her Lord Warringdon's amusing supposition with regard to himself, and thus the ill-humour, which had been observable in his manner during the former part of the even-

ing, was most satisfactorily accounted for. The apathetic Viscount was jealous! the manœuvring mother clapped her hands in delight.

"He must not, however, my dear O'Reilly, be allowed to fritter away his feelings, in the empty attentions and unmeaning gallantries of a ball-room. So I must keep my eye upon him, and prevent his speaking with her this evening; nothing like thwarting, and counter-plotting, for such a temperament as his—in order to give impetus to his otherwise evanescent impressions. So, if I do not allow him to flirt with her to-night, he will rise to-morrow downright in love with her.

And as our readers may have observed, to this plan she had pertinaciously adhered throughout the remainder of the evening.

CHAPTER XII.

Did Lord Warringdon awake the morning after the ball, "downright it love," with Isabal Wilmot?

We do not choose to speak too decidedly on the subject, but our belief is that some progress has been made in causing his Lordship to thaw; inasmuch as the attentions which he had originally paid Isabel, merely to supplant her lover, and outwit her mother, the person he liked best to outwit, after a husband,) without any ulterior object, beyond the amusement of the hour, he now offered from interest in herself. For the first time in his life, he was sure of having inspired a genuine and spontaneous affection, wholly unprompted by interested speculations, evidently discouraged as it was by her family; and again, this attachment was so delicately indicated, so dignified by reserve and womanly pride, that he never could venture to presume upon his discovery of its existence.

And how did Isabel awake the morning after the ball?

Why, very happy and very tired—for she had passed the whole night thinking of all that Warringdon had said, and all he had not said, but which he very likely would have said, had not her mother, either accidentally, or designedly, interfered to prevent him by never allowing them to remain a moment together.

"Oh, yes!" said she to herself, "now I am sure he loves me! for what an instantaneous change took place in his manner, from the time he discovered that O'Reilly was not a rival. Dear, dear

Warringdon! generous, disinterested Warringdon! how I love you! but I would not for worlds you knew *yet how* deeply! how devotedly!"

Naturally of an affectionate disposition, and meeting no return of tenderness from her own family, she had a superabundance of love at her disposal, all of which she now bestowed on the handsome, fashionable, agreeable Viscount, quite sure there was in the transaction a strictly honest exchange of commodities.

On the evening of that day, the usual family party, with the addition of Mr. O'Reilly, were assembled in the drawing-room. Mr. Wilmot, and his agreeable reverence, were talking politics. Maria and Mr. Barham, trash. Lady Anne and Mr. M'Alpine, sentiment. And Lord Warringdon was sitting near Isabel, making love, or at least, something so akin to it, that she quite spoiled a *papier maché* box which she had intended for her mamma.

These conversational duets, carried on for some time, in an under tone, were at length interrupted by Lady Anne.

"Well, Mr. M'Alpine, I will 'take the sense of the house,' upon this motion. Wilmot and Mr. O'Reilly, do leave off counting votes for one moment. Lord Warringdon and Mr. Barham, suspend you flirtations with my daughters, if you please, and give me you several opinions upon a certan knotty point, which threatens to disturb the hitherto unbroken amity that has subsisted between Mr. M'Alpine and myself."

All the gentlemen, except Lord Warringdon, obeyed her commands.

"State the case, Lady Anne," Mr. O'Reilly said.

"Why, you must know, gentlemen, Mr. M'Alpine has the audacity to tell me that he prefers Irish, to English, women! According to him, they are prettier, wiser, better, more capable of loving, and more worthy of being loved; more engaging as girls, more estimable as women; more devoted mistresses, and more attached wives; fonder mothers, kinder friends, and—Heaven knows what besides! In one word, the enumeration of the points of superiority, if noted down, would reach from this to M'Alpine Castle. Now, is not this too bad? Come, Wilmot, what do *you* say? Which are you for, English or Irish?"

"Oh! I enter my vato (veto) against recaiving his vote at all," Mr. M'Alpine interposed; "for he will judge of English women according to his own exparience, and attribute to them generally the perfections peculiar to Lady Anne Wilmot."

"Thank you, Mr. M'Alpine," said Mr. Wilmot, laughing, "for saving me the trouble of making a civil speech to my own wife."

"Well, now the speech has been made for you, pray give us your vote," said Lady Anne.

"Why that happens to be rather a puzzling sort of vote;—my wife is English, and my daughters are Irish,—how can I decide between them? Now I have it:—I would recommend English women to my own sons, (wishing they may be as happy as myself) and Irish women to the sons of other people."

"Bravo, Signor Padre!" Maria exclaimed. "I like that distinction passing well. Now, Mr. O'Reilly, it is your turn."

"Oh, I have nothing to say to any of you, English or Irish. As my vocation is not that of gallantry, I may be allowed, perhaps, to add, I am not at all sorry for it, inasmuch as I think that man the happiest who thinks least about you."

"What a sacrilageous idaa!" Mr. M'Alpine cried.

"Oh, capital! I think you are quite right, Mr. O'Reilly. A wife is such a stoopid, cross sort of thing,—always scolding, or advising one! There you must be as sober as a judge; no fun after once a man is married. I am determined to be an old bachelor,—positively I am," exclaimed Barham.

"Positively you shall not be, though," thought Lady Anne, and so thought Maria.

"Well, now let us count up the votes. Mr. M'Alpine gives a plumper to the Irish; Mr. Wilmot appears inclined to split his vote; Mr. O'Reilly and Mr. Barham will have nothing to say to either of us, so I am afraid the Irish have it. Oh, but I was forgetting! Lord Warringdon has not given his opinion yet. Come, my Lord, which are you for, English or Irish?" asked Lady Anne.

She was extremely happy to find that his Lordship had not been attending to a single syllable of the previous discussion, so that she had to repeat the conversation all over again.

"Now, my Lord, that I have put you in possession of this most difficult case, pray let us, at once, have the benefit of your critical and fastidious taste, knowledge, and experience. Recollect that you are English, and that you are this day the sole champion of your country, for Mr. Barham proves a recreant knight. Now, therefore, Viscount Warringdon, 'for St. George and England?'"

"Recollect, my Lord," Maria cried, "that although you belong to England, you are in Ireland; that we are two to one here, at present; and that Isabel and I have long nails; so your vote, or your eyes, my Lord;—'high, for St. Patrick and Ireland!'"

"Was ever man placed in a more difficult predicament? Honour, patriotism, and Lady Anne, on one side; gratitude, long nails, and

the Miss Wilmots on the other! Fair ladies, thus do I decide between motives and attractions so equally balanced:—I am for English women generally, but Irish women particularly."

"Oh, you mane you prefer English ladies to flirt with, but you would be more sariously attached to an Irish woman."

"*Oui, si elle te ressemblait, belle, bonne et spirituelle,*" the Viscount whispered in Isabel's ear. "Just so, Mr. M'Alpine," he said aloud.

"Now, I move, that the ladies' opinions of the relative merits of the gentlemen of both countries, be collected;—we are dying to know what they think of us," observed Mr. M'Alpine.

"Let us see: Lord Warringdon and Mr. Barham are English,—Mr. M'Alpine Irish,—two to one, so I am for the English," Maria said.

"You forget your father and Mr. O'Reilly."

"No, I don't forget them, mamma; but you know, they count for nothing;—the one, a married man, the other, a man who never will marry: they are as if they were not."

"I cannot say that I feel extraordinarily flattered by your vote, Miss Wilmot; the preference, as you admit, being merely accidental; and now, for your sister's," Lord Warringdon said, turning to Isabel. "Remember," he added, that I was for the Irishwomen, so you must, in common gratitude, decide in favour of Englishmen. Now, 'St. George and England,' again, fair Isabel."

"No, no, my Lord, you gave the lovely daughters of Erin but half your heart,—but I give them the whole of mine; remember *that*, gentle Isabel, and be sure you decide for St. Patrick and Ireland."

"Silence in the court! do not prejudice the minds of the jury," Maria exclaimed.

"I imitate the laudable example of prudence and impartiality set me by Lord Warringdon. So I am for the English generally, but the Irish particularly," said Isabel, smiling.

"*Maligne, que dis tu là?*" Lord Warringdon playfully whispered.

Mr. M'Alpine rewarded the fair speaker with a look of unutterable tenderness; his large white eyes rolling from side to side, like a ship in a heavy gale of wind, and appearing every moment upon the point of fairly tumbling out, "body and bones," as our friend, Mr. Kelly, would say.

Lady Anne thought fit, just then, to challenge the Viscount to a game at chess, hoping that M'Alpine's vanity, evidently excited by what he seemed to consider a decided expression of Isabel's pre-

ference, might hurry him (if allowed the opportunity) into making his proposals in form, and thus quickening the Viscount's movements. When Lord Warringdon accepted her invitation, she placed the chess-board sufficiently near M'Alpine and Isabel for him to overhear whatever conversation should pass between them.

The players had scarcely seated themselves, when Mr. M'Alpine began thus, in a low tone, to Isabel:—

"Yes, you are, indeed, a woman capable of appreciating an Irishman! your preference evinces both sense and taste, such as I should ever expect to find in the most charming of her sex."

"Oh, I did not mean, literally, what I said, Mr. M'Alpine; I was merely laughing with Lord Warringdon, for I really do not prefer Irishmen."

"You raally do not prefer Irishmen? You are the greatest little rogue in the world!" he said, archly; "as if I did not know what you like better than you do yourself; at laste better than you pretend," he added, resuming his usual languishing tone. "I am aware that you have too much taste and romance of sentiment to be interested by an Irishman of the common run; swaggering fellows, ready to fight every man, and make love to every woman they meet. No, my charming Isabel, my sweet, modest, shrinking lily of the vale! No, an Irishman of that class could never be the object of a timid and delicate affection such as yours!—But could not my gentle Isabel love a refined and accomplished Irishman?—A man of mind, capable of understanding and appreciating the soft tenderness of her character; one on whom she could lane for support and encouragement; one whose ardour would be tempered with sensibility, and exalted by enthusiasm; one who would repay her devoted attachment with all the intensity of passion, all the elegance of taste, and all the romance of sentiment; one who could brathe (breathe) but in the atmosphere of her presence; one who could live but on her words, and whose sunshine was her smiles.—Could you not love such an Irishman as that, enchanting crature of love and beauty?" he whispered, grinning a smile of mingled sentiment and archness.

"Really, Mr. M'Alpine, I"——

A look from her mother cut short Isabel's sentence, and she stopped abruptly, colouring and embarrassed.

Mr. M'Alpine smiled with complacency on her timid attempt at a disavowal of her love, and proceeded thus:

"The man on whom you bestow your first and virgin affections must never have loved before he met you—he may have had pass-

ing gallantries, but *none* that need excite an unasy sentiment in your gentle bosom; you must be the first woman he ever raally loved; the first he ever sariously contemplated resigning his liberty to, and committing his honour and pace of mind to; he must be able to say with truth—

"My adorable Isabel—I may have admired others, but I never loved but you. From the first moment I beheld your beauteous form, my fate was saled; for you alone have raalized the romantic idaas and anticipations of my impassioned character. You are the bright, soft dhrame of my soul! the crature of my imagination!—the object of my first, and most passionate aspirations!—Yes! you are indeed, worthy of being the inspiration of poetic fancy; the chosen of a man of mind. Yet, rich as you are in youth, beauty, accomplishments, elegance, refinement, taste, and mind; of gentle birth, and polished manners, surrounded, in a word, by fascinations of every description, I should, however, have escaped the thrawldom of your varied and potent charms, if I had not had rason to believe myself the object of an attachment as enthusiastic on your part as upon mine.—

"And what man has the right to spake thus, my own fair Isabel? Is it not M'Alpine? your adoring, and let me hope, not *un*-adored M'Alpine?—Oh, for the bliss of hearing from your own soft lips this rapturous confirmation of my hopes!—Ah, do let my longing ears drink in the blushing and modest reluctant avowal of your pure and gentle tenderness!—spake, my soft charmer, though it be but a word, one little yes,—to the man who adores you—or a glance will suffice, for I have long been acquainted with the soft language of your bright eyes."

Each time, that unfortunate Isabel had parted her pretty cherry lips, to convey a decided negative to Mr. M'Alpine's hopes, she caught a frowning expression on her mother's brow, which had enforced her silence; and under this martyrdom of her patience and feeling:

"You know," continued Mr. M'Alpine, with a tone and look, of melting tenderness, "you know what interpretation gentlemen, on these occasions, are allowed to put on the silence of ladies. Do you not, my gentle, timid love?"

Isabel could endure it no longer,—she bounded from her seat, throwing down the poker and tongs, and trampling on the lamer extremities of her father, Mr. O'Reilly, and two lapdogs, in the precipitation of her retreat, from the voice of love.

"What a modst creature!" tenderly soliloquized Mr. M'Alpine.

"My dear Isabel! do pray look before you,"—her mother exclaimed.

But the fair fugitive was already at the other side of the door.

"Nay, there she is out into her romantic moonshine,—I know her ways."

"But how very awkward she is sometimes!" Lady Anne continued—"Maria! rub poor little Fido's paw, will you?—I am afraid he is sadly hurt,—'tis your move, my Lord."

He moved; and moved wrong.

"Check to your King!"—she cried.

He made another move, also a false one.

"Check mate!"—and Lady Anne laughed triumphantly.

"I am so delighted to have beaten you at last!—either I have played better, or you worse, than usual."

Why had the Viscount become so suddenly absent and taciturn? Was he out of sorts, at having been beaten at chess, or was he thinking of Mr. Archer, and the election?

"Maria, I wish that you and O'Reily would sing something," said Lady Anne.

Her daughter joyfully assented, glad to be relieved for a while from the trouble of feeding Mr. Barham with good stories.

"What a pleasant girl she is!" the Leicestershire minor observed to the young Candidate.

"Very!" he answered, musing.

"Pity she is so ugly though, is it not?"

"Ugly!" repeated the Viscount, with a stare of astonishment.—"Why, she happens to be one of the prettiest women I have ever seen."

"Good Lord! do you think so?"

"Why, who the deuce thinks otherwise," demanded his Lordship, with a warmth unusual to him. And he relapsed, into his former silence and moodiness, and shortly after left the room; Mr. Barham remaining rooted to the spot, lost in wonderment at Maria Wilmot's being considered by Lord Warringdon as one of the prettiest women he had ever seen.

"Well! I am sure I never should have thought of any one admiring her as a beauty. Her eyes are not bad, I think—and she has good white teeth,—but then her skin is horrid brown; and her mouth so very wide, the widest I ever saw, except Mr. M'Alpine's. Perhaps 'tis her figure that he admires, some people like large women, but then she is so *very* stout and short, however, he must be right I suppose, for I know that he is reckoned a better judge of a horse than any man at Melton."

While thus cogitating, he had placed himself opposite Maria, and remained staring vacantly into her face, during the whole of the time she was singing.

"What on earth can the fool of a boy be thinking of, I wonder!" said to herself the object of his not very flattering ruminations, as she caught his fixed gaze. "A silver penny for your thoughts, Mr. Barham!"

"My thoughts!" he repeated, hesitating and looking more silly even than usual. "I was not thinking of any thing particular,—I was only just thinking of you, and"—

"Much obliged to ye, sir," she interrupted, crossing her hands before her, and dropping a country girl sort of curtsey, "thankee, sir, for your compliment. Thinking of nothing particular, only of me!"

"Oh, you will kill me if you make me laugh so, Miss Wilmot, you do make such fun of one. Well, I will tell you really what I was thinking. I was thinking how well you were looking this evening,—so handsome!" I may as well say so, he thought, as Lord Warringdon says that she does.

"Poor, foolish boy! I suppose he is tipsy," Maria muttered. "Why, my dear creature, what is come over you this evening? you are grown quite civil."

"But am I not always civil to you, Miss Wilmot? I am sure I intend to be so to you, and every body!"

"There again!—me, and every body, bless the dear man!—His compliments are like Penelope's weaving, for he unsays the last moment what he said the moment before. So you don't care more for me than you do for any one else in the house?"

"Oh, indeed I do, Miss Wilmot, I like you better, a great deal better, than any of them, I like you more than any body I ever knew, except Father John, what a pity it is that priests cannot marry! He and you would be such a nice match! only he is a little too old for you."

"Oh, not at all, if there were no other difficulty than Father John's age, it would be all very well, I would much sooner marry a man old enough to be my father, than I would a person younger than myself,—I could not bear the idea of that!"

"You are quite right, Miss Wilmot,—I wish that every body thought as you do. There is Ellen Turner, she was full as old as you, and she wanted greatly to marry me, you know, and a great many other girls too. So you see, every body has not such sense as you have. As for fun, there is nobody like you;—at your ball

there was not any girl so droll as you; do you know, I was rather disappointed at that night,—first, and foremost, Father John was not there; then no one would dance a jig with me, they were all stiff, and stuck up, like English girls; only they spoke with a brogue, I am sure I never should have taken them to be Irish. Oh, but Miss Wilmot, I had nearly forgotten, you have not told me what you were all laughing at the other day at dinner!"

"I wish to Heaven I was once married to him, that I might not be worried in this way, to amuse him!"

She laughed, however, and looked the picture of good humour, while she prepared to gratify her persecuting companion.

And now, we will leave her relating her funniest story, and he laughing his noisiest laugh, and see what has become of the other couple of lovers; first, however, giving a passing glance at Lady Anne, and Mr. M'Alpine, who are engaged in a low and earnest conversation; he telling her of the mutual tenderness which subsists between her daughter and himself; and she listening, with all the smiling attention of a mother, whose favourite project has been attained.

CHAPTER XIII.

ISABEL did not, indeed, as her mother had conjectured, content herself with flying merely from the room which contained Mr. M'Alpine, but also from the roof which covered him; in truth, she never stopped to take breath till she had reached a spot in the grounds, of late her favourite haunt, because it had been admired by Lord Warringdon,—and where she had often sauntered with him—a pretty little walk, (just affording room for two.) in a shrubbery, through which ran a clear, rapid, winding stream. She sank, feverish and tired, upon a bank, and sat for some time, looking up at the moon, and down on the water, as if she had come out for no other purpose than to pay them a visit. At length, however, she aroused from her inaction, and began pacing up and down the narrow path, and talking to herself.

"Yes; *my* hour is come. Warringdon loves me, I am sure—but is he sufficiently his own master to be able to follow his inclinations? If he be not, what is to become of me? For now,

that M'Alpine has actually proposed, my mother will begin her system of quiet persecution. Oh, do I not know her? Though she is aware full well that my wedding this man will be a step to my burial, she will have no pity on me—no remorse—but will smilingly doom me to that most appalling of all horrible fates, companionship for life with a man my very soul sickens at! And then, to love another, oh, that cruel aggravation! from my heart I wish," she said, clasping her hands in agony, "I had never seen Warringdon's face!"

"Why?" asked Warringdon, close at her ear.

She cried out at beholding near her the very face she had just been wishing never to have seen.

"My Lord," she said, drawing up her graceful figure, "you have acted unwarrantably in thus intruding on me." She was in the act of moving away, when stopped by Lord Warringdon.

"No, no," he said, taking her hand, "you must not go till you have answered my question. Why do you wish that you had never seen me?"

"Oh, that I was dead!" she cried, bursting into a passion of tears, and struggling to disengage her hand.

"Nay, dear, gentle Isabel, you must not wish to die, but to live—to live for me!" he said, pressing to his lips the fair hand he still continued to retain.

The young Viscount happened to be one of those people who cannot bear to look upon anguish, though they may have little remorse about causing it—he could not therefore contemplate, unmoved, the unostentatious sorrow of a woman who devotedly loved him, and whom he in return also loved, not devotedly, to be sure, but at any rate as well as he could any thing that was not himself.

He had come out to seek her he scarcely knew why, and had found her calling in grief on his name. Is it very surprising, then, if, for once in his life, he was guilty of imprudence?

Kind reader, pray imagine half an hour, or thereabouts, spent in assurances of attachment, as sincere for the moment, on the Viscount's part, as on that of his fair companion.

When they returned to the drawing-room, they found Lady Anne and Mr. M'Alpine still in close chat; and Maria still talking, and Mr. Barham still laughing.

One glance at the daughter told the mother all that had occurred; and her heart bounded, although her face remained calm as usual.

"I am very much obliged to you, my Lord, for bringing in that

naughty girl of mine. Dear child, you should not walk by moonlight; 'tis very unwholesome indeed. You will have such a cold to-morrow, my sweet love! Now, my dear girl, I must insist on your going to bed immediately. Mr. M'Alpine—may I trouble you to touch the bell—I wish to know whether there be a fire in her room. Maria, you look pale, my love, after your dancing last night. Go to your beds, both of you, my sweet girls!"

Need we observe that Lady Anne was anxious to break up the party, that she might have an opportunity of eliciting from his Lordship a declaration in form, before he should have had time to sleep off any portion of his present vivid impressions, in the same way as she had just succeeded in entrapping Mr. M'Alpine into promising his vote. By dismissing her daughters, she also disembarrassed herself of Mr. Barham, who ran after Maria, to hear the sequel of her last story; and of Mr. M'Alpine, who trailed after Isabel, to have "one last look of her he adored," before he retired to rest.

"God bless you! pleasant dreams!" his hostess said, giving him a significant, affectionate nod.

As soon as she found herself alone with the Viscount, Mr. Wilmot and Mr. O'Reilly being too absorbed in politics to be any restraint on her, she thus opened the attack:—

"Can you keep a secret, my Lord? Mr. M'Alpine has this evening proposed for Isabel;" and her face beamed with maternal joy and tenderness.

"Indeed! and is he accepted?" the Viscount enquired carelessly.

"Surely!" she replied.

"That is to say, accepted by your Ladyship, but not by your Ladyship's daughter, I take it."

"Why, how do you know?" she asked, with well-feigned alarm.

"Only because, to my knowledge, she has accepted somebody else."

"Somebody else! Impossible, my Lord!—who could she prefer to Mr. M'Alpine?"

"A very inferior person, I certainly must allow," he replied coolly, "for the object of her preference happens to be my unworthy self."

"You, my Lord!—you must surely be jesting. I never was aware that you admired my daughter, or that she was attached to you—you cannot therefore be serious."

The Viscount repeated his assertion.

"I must say, then, my Lord, that both you and she have placed me in a very awkward situation. As for my daughter, her conduct

is most shameful and disingenuous; she has suffered me actually to pledge myself to Mr. M'Alpine; what *am* I to say to him?" And she appeared much agitated and displeased.

"Oh, say merely that you and your daughter are of different opinions with respect to his merit; and that the young lady happens to have bad taste, and prefers me,—that's all."

"Early in our acquaintance, if I mistake not, I informed your Lordship how my daughter was circumstanced; permit me to add, that you have not acted towards me with the openness my confidence merited."

The Viscount looked at her composedly, but said nothing.

"However", she continued, "I leave my daughter free to decide between her suitors; of course, her choice concerns herself more than it does me; all I wish is, that she had known her own mind a little sooner, and could have spared me the pain of having to undeceive Mr. M'Alpine."—Then, making as it were, an effort to be civil, she added, I trust that you will not attribute any portion of the regret I feel, (and which I do not hesitate to acknowledge,) at the failure of my favourite project, to a want of personal consideration for your Lordship. I am perfectly aware how many mothers would rejoice in securing so flattering a connexion for their daughters. But, my Lord, recollect that I have known M'Alpine from boyhood up to the present moment, and a more noble-minded, amiable being there never breathed! His love for Isabel is absolute idolatry; I could therefore have no doubt of his making her happy. Then, again, my Lord, some little selfishness mingled with my other feelings. I was anxious to have my favourite child settled near me, that I might still watch over her with a mother's care; and should, by any possibility, some slight misunderstanding occur in the young *menage*, I could explain and advise, and dear M'Alpine would have listened to me with all the deference of a son, for he knows I love him like a son of my own. Poor fellow, what a blow this will be to him. I quite dread to meet him!"

"What a long tiresome story about nothing!" said the Viscount to himself.

"Well, Lady Anne, all I can say is, that I regret to have been the occasion of disturbing such glowing visions of domestic felicity. It is certainly peculiarly unfortunate that you have not been able to inspire your daughter with your enthusiasm for Mr. M'Alpine. But there is no accounting for the strange fancies of young ladies, sometimes; they do not always see with their mammas' eyes, and so much the worse for themselves; but, my dear Lady Anne, it is

twelve o'clock!—time for honest folks like you and me to go to bed.—*Bon soir!*"

His hostess held out her hand to him, with a smile grave, but kind, just the smile, in fact, which a mother gives the man she accepts, but does not rejoice in, as a son-in-law.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. M'Alpine had been all night dreaming of his Isabel, and was now lying absorbed in blissful anticipations of the happy time when he and the "beloved of his soul," would go sailing about the lake, opposite "the Castle," making love; when the door softly opened, and Tom Lannigan, his own man, made his appearance.

"Is that you, Tom?"

"It is, sir, veritably:" answered Tom.

"Is Miss Isabel up yet, Tom?"

"She is, sir. I have a bit of a letter she gave me for you, about half-an-hour ago, sir, but I was loath to disturb you, coming in with it."—

"Ah, that's the way to dale with the women—lave them to themselves, and you see how soon they come running after us! The little rogue is afraid now I am displeased, because I did not follow her out of the room, when she made off from me last night, and thinks to get round me again. My gentle cratur, I never could be angry with you, even for a moment:" said Mr. M'Alpine to himself. "Tom, open the shutters, and give me the letter—and fetch me the warm water, till I dress."

Mr. M'Alpine carried the perfumed missive of "the lady whom he loved," to his lips, and then broke the seal.

Instead of "my adored Peter," he was surprised to read, "my valued friend." He looked at the signature; it was Anne, not Isabel Wilmot; but the similarity of handwriting of the mother and daughter had more than once produced similar mistakes. He, however, read on—

"This is the seventh attempt I have made this morning to address you; I have in vain sought words strong enough to depict my feelings; my affection for you, my indignation against Lord Warringdon, and my surprise and deep displeasure at my daughter's unparalleled duplicity.

"When you first paid your addresses to her, I had reason to believe her ardently, though secretly, attached to you; I, therefore, did all in my power to encourage your attentions. I find, but too late, that I have misled you, that I have deceived you, in fact; but, alas! my noble, confiding young friend, believe me, I was myself deceived, and I regret to add, by my own child.

"On mentioning to Lord Warringdon, in the joy of my heart, last night, the fulfilment of my long-cherished hope, namely, the union between you and the dearest of all my children, he acquainted me that my daughter had been for some time engaged to himself; her reluctance, therefore, to answer you a short time before, which we both naturally attributed to mere girlish nonsense and timidity, was, it now appears, occasioned by a consciousness of her unworthy double-dealing conduct, by you and myself.

"I have passed a miserable night, and am totally unable this morning to meet you; overpowered as I am by shame and wretchedness.

"Though I may not call you son, continue to regard me as your friend. Allow me to hope that we may yet meet as heretofore, when the present painful impression on our minds shall have worn away. Meanwhile, my amiable, excellent young friend, accept my fervent prayers for your happiness, and above all, for your wedded happiness with a woman more worthy your generous and romantic feelings, than, I grieve to say, my misjudging and ungrateful daughter has proved herself to be.—Ever believe me, sincerely and affectionately yours,

"ANNE WILMOT."

If the fair writer of the epistle found herself, as she states, totally unable to "depict her" own feelings, we may be pardoned if we confess ourselves equally at a loss to describe those of the reader of it. He laid down the letter, and took it up again; he rubbed his eyes, and he twisted his night-cap from side to side, as he tried to ascertain whether he was sleeping or waking. He, the tender, refined, romantic, intellectual, impassioned, captivating Peter M'Alpine, rejected! and a paltry, titled man of fashion preferred! His astonishment and indignation knew no bounds. At first, he intended leaving Castle Wilmot before breakfast, and not again meeting the undeserving and ungrateful object of his late adoration; but a few moments' consideration convinced him that a ride of seventeen miles, Irish ones, moreover, fasting, would be an exploit equally disagreeable and unnecessary, seeing there was no

reason that because he happened to be a rejected lover, he should also be a starved man. So he decided, (wisely as we think,) not only on eating his breakfast, previous to his departure, but even of making as good a one as ever he had done in all his life before, whether in or out of love.

"After all," he soliloquized as he descended the stair-case, "'tis worse for her than for me, a great dale. I have ten thousand a-year in actual possession. Warringdon's father may live to make an old man of him, and, maintime, he will often be hard run for money; and as for the men themselves, I flatter myself—" and he grinned with much self-complacency, "no one but herself would make a comparison."

He found all the party, with the exception of Lady Anne and Mr. O'Reilly, assembled. Lord Warringdon and Isabel chatting at the window; she looking very pretty, and he, very, very gallant. Maria, as usual, "killing" Mr. Barham.

Mr. Wilmot and his eldest daughter advanced, and shook hands with their guest—and Lord Warringdon and Isabel bowed.

"Where is Lady Anne and Mr. O'Reilly?" he enquired, in his usual tone.

"Mamma is very unwell, indeed," repled Maria; "so much so that she has ordered her breakfast up to her room: and Mr. O'Reilly was sent for express, very early this morning, by one of his parishioners."

"How funny Mr. M'Alpine must feel!" Barham observed, in a whisper, to Maria, who had just been imparting to him the domestic intelligence of the day. "If I asked somebody to marry me, and that she would not have me, I should feel so odd, should not you? But I never intend marrying,—don't you think I am right, Miss Wilmot?"

Maria assured him that she highly approved his determination.

"I am very glad your sister is going to make such a good match! But I wish he had chosen you instead of her. Should you like to be married, Miss Wilmot?"

"No!' replied Maria.

"Oh, but I wish you were, though;—you would keep such a nice, pleasant house! Would you not ask me to it, for the sake of old times, and all the laughing we have had together?"

"Oh, whenever I marry, I intend that you shall consider my house as your home, Mr. Barham!"

"I am sure I am greatly obliged to you, Miss Wilmot. I should so like to be at your house! Now, will you promise me one thing?

Wherever you are married, will you ask me to your wedding? I would come any distance to it."

"I promise you," replied Maria, holding out her hand to him, "that as sure as I shall be at my own wedding, so sure shall you!"

"Oh! thank you, thank you, Miss Wilmot! I hope it will be soon."

"So do I, from the bottom of my heart!" said Maria to herself.

"What a lot of ham and chicken and things Mr. M'Alpine is eating," Barham continued; "I never should take him for a rejected lover, should you?"

"Have you any commands, ladies and gentlemen, for Mount Pleasant?" Mr. M'Alpine enquired. "I shall start from here in an hour's time."

"Oh, you must not go so soon, M'Alpine; stay with us a little longer, Mr. Wilmot insisted, good-naturedly."

"Thank you, I ra'ally cannot. Lord Templemore has been for some time extramely pressing with me to go and see him, and I promised him faithfully I would, when I saw him here the other day. What a pleasant, good-humoured man he is! and his daughters I like of all things, particularly Lady Mary. I danced with her at your ball, and I was ra'ally extramely interested in her conversation; though not strictly handsome, she is a very stylish-looking girl, and has a great dale of mind;" and he glanced over at Isabel, as much as to say, "you see I don't intend wearing the willow for you."

Lord Templemore had, in fact, for some time been supposed very desirous of bestowing one of his five frightful daughters on his friend, Mr. M'Alpine. Hitherto, however, the good Earl's intentions had been frustrated by Mr. M'Alpine's own opposition to the scheme; but now, thanks to Miss Isabel Wilmot's blindness, that obstacle was removed: and Mr. M'Alpine galloped from the hall-door of Castle Wilmot with the intention of raising one of the Lady Pemberton's to the enviable station of wife to a "man of mind."

And now that the stimulus afforded by M'Alpine's pretensions no longer existed, Lady Anne began to apprehend that the Viscount's passion might cool; she, therefore, decided on leaving Castle Wilmot and removing to the assize town, where the candidate would have so much electioneering business on hand, as to leave him no leisure for repentance or *ennui*. It was, therefore, settled that Lord Warringdon, Mr. Barham, the Miss Wilmots, and their mamma, were to set off immediately, leaving Mr. Wilmot ostensibly to send down the freeholders, but, we have reason to think that the motive

assigned was not the real one; and we believe that the father of the Miss Wilmots was just as anxious to keep out of sight of the High Sheriff as the young ladies were to keep within that of their two English guests.

CHAPTER XV.

On the evening previous to the day appointed for the opening of the poll, a small group of gentlemen stood at one of the windows of Lord Warringdon's committee-room, looking out on the laughing, shouting, good-humoured crowd, assembled in the street below.

"There is not a man of Archer's in town yet," said Malony, one of Lord Warringdon's committee, to another gentleman of his party; "he will never come to the poll,—you will see."

"Oh, I hope he will, though," interrupted Mr. Barham, who was leaning half out of the window, contemplating this noisy scene with infinite glee; "or else I shall lose all the sport, and I may never happen to see another Irish election. What capital fun it must be, to be sure!"

"Aye, faith it is, capital fun indeed!" observed Mr. Malony. "What do you say, my Lord," he continued, addressing the Viscount, "to my having carried a dozen messages, on one election, for Mr. Wilmot, and sending six on my own account? He fought five of his, but all mine apologized,—the blackguards!"

"Oh, what famous fun it must be! I hope in goodness there will be a contest, Mr. Malony; don't you?"

"Why, to say the truth, for my own share, I would desire nothing better; but, of course, on Lord Warringdon's account, I wish there may not be one."

"Oh, what harm would it do him!" Barham asked.

"Why, my dear fellow, do you know the expense of a contested election?"

"Psha! what is the use of money, but to amuse oneself? I am sure I would rather spend it on fun than on any thing else in the world."

"Well, what do you say now, O'Reilly?" Mr. Malony demanded triumphantly!—"Do you still hold out that there will be a contest?"

"Yes,—for Archer's friends speak as resolutely as ever."

"Pooh! they may bluster, but, take my word for it, they will never come to the poll. Hav'nt we all the great interests of the county? and which have they? not even M'Alpine's."

"Don't be too sure of him, I advise you; Archer has been for the last week at Mount Pleasant, tampering, you will find, with Lord Templemore, and talking over M'Alpine."

"Talking over the Devil, man!" exclaimed Malony impatiently. "How can he go in the teeth of his promise?—Did he not tell Lady Anne and Mr. Wilmot his and their interest should go together?"

"And would this be the first time of his saying one thing, and doing another? Don't you know he is an eel, that can wriggle himself out of the closest-tied and most elaborately-constructed knot ever devised by the ingenuity of man?—more particularly on this occasion, that he has wounded feelings to talk about."

"Ha, ha, ha!—the deuce mend him! Isabel Wilmot served him right, cursed, prosing fool! but no matter for that, he promised, and there's an end of it;—he can't, he dare not—go back at it. If he owes you a grudge," Mr. Malony continued, turning to Lord Warringdon, "in the name of God, why does he not call you out, and shoot you at once!—that would be a handsome, gentlemanlike way of settling the business. But, curse it! to break one's promise to a man, because he and you happened to like the same girl, and she chose you rather than him,—*that* would be confoundedly shabby!—I tell you what, my Lord, if I had been in his place, I would have shot you as dead as a door nail; but I would have voted for you all the same, because I promised."

"Ha, ha, ha! bravo, Paddy! shoot him first, and vote for him afterwards! Oh, what a capital bull!" shouted Barham, clapping Malony on the back.

"I did not say so, man"—Malony replied rather sulkily.

"Oh, you did! you positively did! 'I'd have shot you as dead as a door nail, but I would have voted for you all the same'—those were your very words; oh, 'tis a regular bull!" and Barham rubbed his hands with delight.

"It is no bull at all, I tell you," insisted Mr. Malony. "Pray, why might I not shoot him, and vote for him at the same time?—vote for him first, of course, and shoot him afterwards. You should not take a man up till he is down, my good fellow."

"Oh, but you *were* down! the way you say it now is not the way you said it at first—no, no! that's no go. It was a regular bull! so there's no use in denying it. I hope I shan't forget to tell it to Miss Wilmot, what fun we shall have!"

"Take a friend's advice, and make fun of something else," said Mr. Malony, slowly and emphatically.

"I don't see why I may not laugh at you, as well as any body else, Mr. Malony?"

"You must not, if I bid you not."

"Oh, yes, I shall though," Barham insisted with boyish obstinacy.

"I tell you once more, that I advise you not," said Mr. Malony, looking very dark.

"Suppose I don't chose so take your advice, what then?" queried Barham.

"Why then I will shew an English ass what he gets by meddling with an Irish bull!" and the tall and formidable Mr. Malony squared his broad shoulders, and scowled from beneath his heavy beetle brows, at the simple, wilful boy.

"An English ass!" cried Barham, his smooth, almost childish, face repaying as well as it was able, the menacing looks of his antagonist: "how dare you call me an English ass?"—and his hand was raised to suit the action to the words, when his arm was arrested by Mr. O'Reilly.

"Nonsense, Barham, he did not mean it—it was only a jest."

"A jest! no, no—I am not quite greenhorn enough to be made believe that a thing is a jest which is not one. Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly, not quite ass enough for that!—Let me go, I say!" and Barham struggled violently, though ineffectually, in O'Reilly's grasp.

"Malony," said the young priest, who, by virtue of the sanctity of his profession, might venture to approach the tiger in his wrath; "is it worth while to quarrel with a friend for a foolish word?—any man may take a jest. Come; say that you are sorry for the expressions you made use of, and shake hands, Malony!"

"Mr. O'Reilly, mind your own business if you please, and don't give yourself any trouble about mine," Mr. Malony replied.

"Let me go, let me go!" Barham still continued to vociferate, "I want to give him his answer."

"And what might that answer be?" demanded Mr. Malony.

"A pitch into your face!" roared Mr. Barham.

"Now, we are quits then!" replied Malony, tossing his glove to Barham. "Any one that wants me," he added, looking at the young Englishman, "will find me at Costelloe's hotel. Good morning to you, gentlemen!" and he stalked out of the room very like an angry turkey-cock.

"You have done a very silly thing, Barham," said O'Reilly, "to think of quarrelling with the greatest fire-eater in the county, for

the sake of a stupid jest. I wish you had not said what you did about the blow, and we might have got you out of it after all !"

"And pray how do you know, Mr. O'Reilly, that I wanted you to get me out of it ?—do you think I am afraid of him ?—no—nor wouldn't if he was twice as big and as savage as he is. I don't care one straw about himself, or his fire-eating, I can tell him. Oh, Lord Warringdon, we are both English—will you then be my Friend, and take a message for me to him ?"

"Why, I should, indeed, be most happy to oblige you, my dear Barham," replied his Lordship, "but you are aware that Mr. Malony is one of my most zealous and efficient electioneering friends; so that I could not possibly act against him."

"Oh, very well, I must only do the best I can;" and Barham sallied forth in quest of a friend, (a friend ?) to arrange preliminaries for getting himself shot, or making him shoot another person as soon as possible.

"I must go immediately, and have them bound over," said O'Reilly.

"Do, for pity's sake !" replied the Viscount. "It would be a cursed nuisance," he added, as the door closed after O'Reilly, and he was left alone, "if this Malony should be shot; it would place me in a very ticklish position with regard to my election. Confound the pair of them, they deserve to be both shot for their folly !" and his Lordship looked over his memorandum-book, to see how many remained on his lists, to be conciliated—and how, and why.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Did ye hear the report, Miss Maria ?" asked Pat Murphy, the following morning after he had in vain fidgetted about the room, in hopes of exciting her attention, or that of Lady Anne.

"No, what report, Pat ?"

"The one, Miss, about Mr. Barham and Mr. Malony."

"Why, what has happened to them ?"

"A terrible thing, Miss—t'was Jim Naughten tould me, an' he has a good right to know, wherein, 'twas himsel' that dhruv him—he couldn't think what in the world was the matther whin Misther Costelloe called him out of his sleep this morning, and says he to him, Jim, says he—"

"Oh, never mind, Pat," interrupted Maria, "what Mister Costelloe said to Jim, only tell us at once what Jim said to you."

"Sure, Miss, that's what I'm doin'—all I'm tellin' you is what Jim tould me."

"'Jim,' says Misther Costelloe, 'get up this minute, an' dhrive as fast as if the Divil was at your heels, to the barracks, for Misther Barham that's goin' to fight a duel with Mr. Malony, beyant at Kilmore, at break o'day.'"

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Lady Anne, "Barham gone to fight with Malony! 'Tis all over with us, my dear Maria," she added, in a low voice; "and after all the trouble we have had! It is really too provoking."

"Bad enough," replied Maria, in the same tone. "However, you know all is not lost that is in danger. Come, Pat, finish your story, and as quickly as you can."

"I will, Miss."

"'By the powers, then,' says Jim, 'I'm goin' to dhrive a man I'll niver dhrive agin any how, the crature, if it's wid Mr. Malony he's goin' to fight, Misther Costelloe; for he's the Divil itsel' wid the pistuls, the greatest fire-ater in the Province, barrin' the masther.'

"'Och, Jim,' says Mr. Costelloe, 'who is there we'd think of comparing with Mr. Wilmot, in regard of fire-ating; he's the wondher of Ireland, not to talk of the province, Jim.'

"You never seen a man, my Lady, fondher of another than what Mr. Costelloe is of the masther;—and good right he has, troth;—isn't it the masther made him what he is? and Mrs. Costelloe fondher agin, an'—"

"Oh, yes, I am sure they are, Pat, as fond as possible of my father, and we are greatly obliged to them; but, go on, and tell us what has become of Mr. Barham," interrupted Maria, rather impatiently.

"Well, Miss, Jim got up, and dhruve Mr. Barham, and his second, Capt. Williams, the fine cliver-looking gentleman that was up at the Castle the night of the ball, you remember, Miss? an Englishman, with big whiskers. Well, Father O'Reilly thought to bind 'em over, an' sint to Costelloe's to thry and catch 'em; but, faith, Misther Malony was too many for him; and he hid himsel' and Misther Barham between the matthrasses of one of the beds, and there they were suffocating, an' afeard o' their lives they'd be nabbed, but by great good luck they warn't; not but, indeed, Misther Barham a'most ruined it all by his foolishness, laughin' so, you'd think the life would lave him, shakin' undher the bed,

an' Misther Malony fit to be tied, he was so mad wid him, but not darin' to spake, for fear the pace officers would hear him. Well, as soon as they wint, he made Misther Barham go sleep at the barracks, to be out of harum's way, an' he wint himsel' to a friend of his at Kilmore, to be on the spot airly."

"Well, and how are they both now, Pat?" demanded both ladies at once, taking advantage of the narrator's stopping to draw his breath.

"Faith, my Lady, badly enough. Misther Malony is kilt as dead as a herring, and Misther Barham is lying, not expected to live, at a small public house Father O'Reilly brought him to."

"Heavenly Powers!" exclaimed Lady Anne.

"I never believe half what I hear," observed Maria. "What was the quarrel about, Pat?"

"About a lady, Miss."

"A lady!" cried Maria, "What lady?"

"Pat, order the carriage! I will see O'Reilly immediately, that is the only way of ascertaining the truth of the story."

"If he should die?" said Lady Anne.

"It would be a bad business:" answered Maria.

"Deplorable, indeed!" sighed Lady Anne.

She stepped into her carriage, and drove off.

The streets were thronged with Castle Wilmot freeholders hurrahing, and shouting "Warringdom for ever."—Jim Naughten's report of the English Lord's generosity, and of his being in "every perticular, the thruth of a gintleman," (in support of which assertion, the compliment of the five pound note was not forgotten,) had already secured him an overwhelming majority of the dhrivers, butchers, grocers, and butchers' and grocers' boys, waiters, ostlers, carmen, beggars, and such like gentry of the town—and Jim was now flying about in all directions, waving his hat, and jumping over his stick, collecting his boys, and exhorting them for the honour of God, and of their town, to be sure and break the head of every Archer, who should dare shew himself in their free, loyal, and religious streets.

Here might be seen groups of gentlemen, gesticulating and thumping one another's shoulders, in their eagerness to prove, for the hundhredth time, a position already admitted as incontrovertible; viz., the superior wisdom, valor, and social importence of every individual composing the party to which they belonged, and of the consequent certainty of their triumph. A little further on might be observed some members of the Roman Catholic priesthood,

more quietly, but not less zealously, haranguing an attentive audience on the liberal and enlightened principles of the Right Honourable Viscount, who was proclaimed by them, and admitted by their listeners, to be an honour to England, and anticipated as a blessing to Ireland.

Nor were the female part of the population indifferent spectators of the preparations for the approaching struggle, which engrossed their husbands, fathers, lovers, brothers, or friends ; there they were, elbowing, scolding, and all but shooting whoever presumed to gainsay their fiat, that Lord Warringdon, and none but he, should be, returned for their town.

The ladies being among his most zealous advocates—first, because he was *not* an Orangeman ; and, secondly, because he was young and handsome :—the old ones might be seen hurrying to chapel to pray for him, while the young ones, sauntering up and down the square, listening to the band, or standing looking out at windows, flirted for him ; exhorting those already his friends, confirming the vacillating, and endeavouring, by smiles, or poutings, to cajole, or frighten, his declared enemies,—kneeling to some, almost embracing others. How could they do less for so handsome, so gallant a candidate, who had given a ball at the assembly-rooms, and had danced with "every girl of consequence" in the room? Besides, he had such beautiful dark eyes, and he made such an elegant bow, and another besides, which they did not, however, add, but which we will do for them—"Besides, he had all the dashing young men of the county on his side."

Nor were the females of lower degree less energetic in his behalf, groups of them were gathered round the shop-doors, or hall-doors, insisting to one another, and all of the worthier gender *(soi disant,)* they could get to listen to them, "that it would be a murther outright, a mortal sin, troth it would, to disappoint such a darlin', purty, free-spoken, free-givin' gintleman, the frind and son-in-law to be of Misther Wilmot, the Lord prosper and purtect him!"

We say that all this "*might* be seen," but we do not take upon ourselves to assert that Lady Anne observed all, or, indeed, any of the bustling, good-humoured, lively scenes passing around her, so completely was her interest in Warringdon's election lost in her fears for Barham's life.

She was roused from her somewhat unpleasant reflections, by loud and vehement shouts of welcome, from the mob of the town, and "loyal" and affectionate greetings from the Castle Wilmot tenantry, when they recognised the carriage, as Bartly Kilfoy tried

to steer it through the dense mass of human beings, which encumbered its progress, without overturning it or crushing them.

"High for her Ladyship! high for the masther! hurrah for the English lord! Warringdon for ever! Wilmot for ever! success to them, and the Divil's curse to their inemies!" and various other "neat and appropriate" expressions of zeal and attachment, were poured forth in chorus from hundreds of rough throats.

"Whisht, boys, whisht! and God bless ye!" cried Bartly Kilfoy, "or y'ell frighten the horses!"

"Frighten 'em! is it the Castle Wilmot horses to be frightened at the boys hurrahing for their master? Faith, they have a good right to be used to it, by this time, any how."

But the Castle Wilmot horses, like some ladies, were capricious animals, and chose, despite of the good reason just adduced, to be nervous and agitated, so they began to plunge, and lash, Bartly Kilfoy to coax and curse by turns, and Lady Anne to scream.

"Never fear, my Lady, never fear!" cried the wild crowd around her. "Take them stupid bastes off, Bartly, and we'll dhraw her Ladyship ourselves."

And now a violent contest ensued between "her own boys," as they called themselves, and "the boys of the town," for the honour of drawing her. And while they roared, and cursed, and shouldered one another, the unfortunate victim of their gallant contention was knocked from side to side of the disputed vehicle, till she lay exhausted, scarcely able even to shriek out to them, "to keep the peace."

"Oh, we will, my lady, and why not? sure arn't we paceable? quite paceable—get out o' that ye vagabones, and don't be frightening her Ladyship! what call have ye to her at all? we are her own boys—glory be to God, and know how she ought to be thrated."

"An' isn't she in our town? 'tis we that has the best right to her—so be off this moment, or we'll make ye—be off, ye sheepstalers!" vociferated the boys of the town.

"Ye bred and born murdhering villains, how dare ye call us that?" roared the insulted Castle Wilmots—and up flew hundreds of shillelaghs, and off flew hundreds of hats, as the said shillelaghs descended, accompanied by yells and execrations, such as none but Irishmen can utter, and which poor Lady Anne listened to in an agony of terror.

Just at that moment, Mr. O'Reilly appeared; flung himself in the midst of the crowd, and down went the sticks at once.

"'Tis our own town, you know, Father O'Reilly! one party submissively represented.

"We are her own boys:" expostulated the others.

"I am ashamed of ye all, town and country;" answered the young priest. "Gather up your sticks and hats, you quarrelsome, good for nothing fellows, and begone! a pretty way, indeed, of showing your respect for a Lady, to frighten her out of her senses—I am ashamed of ye!

"My dear O'Reilly," said Lady Anne, "I have been in search of you for the last hour, to hear something about unfortunate Barham, he is mortally wounded, I understand."

"Oh, no! no such thing—'tis a mere flesh wound, and he will be as well as ever in a day or two."

"Thank God!" piously ejaculated Lady Anne.

"But," he continued, "poor Maloney's arm is broken."

"Oh, only that! I heard that he was killed;" Lady Anne replied with indifference. "But, tell me, was the quarrel about a lady?"

O'Rilley laughed. "Make your mind easy on that head! No—the dispute was about a bull, not a lady. By the way, Barham, with all his folly and foolishness, is a fine fellow: you will not have to find the courage, as well as sense, of the *menage*, and that is some comfort. I am glad, more glad than I can tell, that at least, in that respect, he is not unworthy of Maria Wilmot; not utterly contemptible; still it is a terrible sacrifice!"

"Nonsense, my dear O'Reilly—sixteen thousand a-year may reconcile any woman to a fool—and I am very sorry I cannot add another epithet—for the more courage he has, the more difficult it will be to manage him—I shall never be able to frighten him, I fear."

O'Reilly shrugged his shoulders, sighed, and jumped into the carriage, and they proceeded to the court-house.

To their astonishment, the first person they saw on reaching the hustings, was Barham, pushing a way for himself and his late antagonist, who was shouting with pain and enthusiasm.

"For Heaven's sake, Malony, how could you be mad enough to come here with a broken arm?" asked O'Reilly, who had run after the duellists of the morning, and bosom-friends of mid-day.

"What matter about it? I wanted to see the sport, I was going mad there at Costelloe's listening to the hurrahing, and I in bed, having nothing to do with it. I begged the doctor and people, for God's sake, to let me come, but they wouldn't—so I waited awhile, and presently they all set off here, and left me—and then I got up softly, and went to Barham's room, to ask him to help me on with

my clothes, and there I found him dressing too, so we agreed to come away together—we nicked them, didn't we, Barham?"

"I think," observed O'Reilly, smiling, "that you will find yourselves 'nicked' into a fever a-piece for this exploit."

"Capital fun!" exclaimed Barham. "Do you know, Malony, I was just thinking how droll it is that you and I should be here such good friends, arm in arm, after what happened this morning?"

"Oh, not at all, my dear fellow—you are often ten times better friends than ever with a man after fighting him. That is to say, if you don't happen to kill him, you know—it brings you acquainted with a man at once—you see directly what he is made of—now, for instance, only for that little misunderstanding between us, I might never have liked you, or respected you as I do at present; for now I see you are a stout fellow, as well as a good-natured one, and a devilish good shot, into the bargain, and I assure you I am uncommonly glad I did not kill you this morning."

"Thank you, I am very much obliged to you, Malony, for all your good-nature—and believe me, the regard is mutual;" answered Barham, grasping the hand of his companion.—

"Listen, listen," cried O'Reilly, "Warringdon is going to speak."

We will, not, however, trouble our readers with a detail of his Lordship's harangue: we think it sufficient to state that it contained the usual common-places, about himself and his constituency, profession of devotion to their interests, praise of himself, and abuse of his opponent, to be found in all public displays of the same nature, throughout the united Empire, with the addition, in this case, of much vehement and energetic declamation in favour of civil and religious liberty, and assurances of his ardent zeal in the "great cause."

His oration was received with loud acclamation, and cries of "Warringdon for ever! The true friend of Ireland and the county! No double dealing in him! but comes to the point at once, and spakes his mind plainly."

Mr. Archer then came forward, and was received with groans and hisses, not a few, cries of "Down with the Orangeman! down with the black Protestant! that wants to keep all the loaves and fishes to himself! and down with the thraitors and tyrants that support him! to the divil wid them all!"

The shew of hands was declared, by the High Sheriff, to be in favour of Viscount Warringdon. But Mr. Archer's friends demanded a poll; and accordingly, a man was polled on each side,

and the court-house was soon after cleared of its noisy occupants, both parties talking big of their hopes of to-morrow, when the "battle" was to begin in earnest.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE eventful morning came, and the whole town was alive at the dawn of day; crowds of partizans of all ages and ranks gathering round the committee-rooms of the opposing candidates; electioneering agents, oratorizing, explaining, or mystifying, as suited their purpose; looking over certificates, and "making Pat Conny sinsible he was only to be Pat Conny the first time he voted, but Dennis Sleevan, the second time, in regard of poor Dennis not being convenient just then, "because he was berried last week." And reminding Martin Donovan, he mustn't forget to slip a flea inside his lase, that he might swear with a safe conscience, that the life in it was still in existence," and other trifling, though necessary, arrangements, for the proper carrying on of their employer's interests. And voters were eating, drinking, shouting, and whirling their ferrals to give them "the raal fighting touch," and among the noisiest of the noisy, as in duty bound, were the Castle Wilmot boys, who strove hard, by all the means in their power, to keep up the honour of "the family," and make as much riot as possible.

"Which of you has seen or heard any thing of M'Alpine?" demanded Mr. Malony, as he entered Lord Warringdon's committee-room, his face flushed from pain and impatience.

"Still at Mount Pleasant, I suppose," replied one of the group he addressed.

"Still at Mount Pleasant! confound him! what is he doing there?"

"Making love to Lady Mary Pemberton, I hear."

"Making love to the Devil, man!—why isn't he here? who ever heard of a man leaving his freeholders to themselves in this way? How can he tell who they vote for when he's not on the spot? Making love indeed! the bletherem skite of a fellow! always bothering some woman or other with his cursed poetry, or romance, and she wishing him at the Devil all the while, for his pains. I bring up my men myself, my Lord; I take care that nobody dare meddle

with a freeholder of mine, or I'd put a bullet through his head, and distrain every beast belonging to the tenant who dared even to think of voting according to his own vagaries. Making love, indeed—the numbskull!"

Mr. Malony's invective against the romantic Mr. M'Alpine was cut short by Father John Molloy's entrance, looking as if he were the bearer of portentous information. Lord Warringdon advanced, and shook hands most cordially with "his kind and excellent friend, Mr. Molloy."

"My Lord, I am credibly informed that there's a batch of M'Alpines in town, along with Archer's men!" and the worthy priest accompanied this startling intelligence with an ominous shake of the head.

"Pooh! pooh! Father John: 'tis impossible," Malony interrupted. "Is it the M'Alpine servants, who are at rack-rents, and dare not call their souls their own? Do you think they would have the courage to vote against his orders? Not they."

"But, Malony, what do you say, if 'tis by his orders they are voting?"

"Do you suppose he wants to have cold lead lodged in his brains?" quietly demanded, in his turn, Mr. Malony.

"But, my dear sir, have you ascertained that Mr. M'Alpine *has* sent down his men for Mr. Archer?" queried the Viscount.

"Why, my Lord, I have it on good authority that he has. A sister of Pat Sullivan's wife, (M'Alpine's foster-brother, you know, Malony,) told Mrs. M'Donogh's daughter's husband, a first cousin of her own, and nurse to Mr. Wilmot, that Mr. M'Alpine's agent, Fahy, had sent back orders to Pat Sullivan, for all the men, them that lived by the say-side, and them that did not, to come down by water, for fear any of the Castle Wilmots would murdher 'em, if they come by the road; but to take care for his life would Pat Sullivan let on, 'twas his masther that bid him."

Here "Rascal! scoundrel! blackguard! liar' coward!" and other synonymous and equally euphonious epithets arose from all parts of the room, coupled with the name of Peter M'Alpine of M'Alpine Castle.

"The only way in the world is to send him a message at once," observed Mr. Malony. "Here, my Lord, sit down, I'll get you a pen and ink in a minute. Now for it!" he cried, clapping the table with the only hand he had at liberty.

"Now for it!" echoed all the by-standers.

"The cannibals!" muttered the Viscount. "But," he added,

aloud, "before I send Mr. M'Alpine a message, I think we should have better authority than that of foster-brothers and nurses. How can we tell whether one word of this story be true? My respected friend here, Mr. Molloy, does not give it on his own authority, or it would, of course, be conclusive."

"Oh, well,—may be so," Mr. Malony reluctantly acquiesced. "However," he added, "you may as well write the letter, my Lord, to have it ready to send when we want it, for I dare say, before the election is over, he will be playing us a trick, and then we have our challenge written, and nothing to do but to dash it off; and even if we shouldn't want it for him, we shall for somebody else; with a few alterations, you know, the same copy will serve for a dozen different people."

Lord Warringdon did not much relish the idea of an assortment of ready-made challenges. However, he was too prudent to object to the proposal; and, in a very few minutes, a letter full of flogging, posting, and shooting, dictated by Mr. Malony, and penned by his Lordship, was read aloud, to the great delight and admiration of the company at large.

"Do you know, I am in great hopes that you will have to fight M'Alpine: it would make you so popular with the mob! For the fighting candidate has always the best chance, you know, of being the sitting member. I assure you, Mr. Wilmot would not have kept the county so long, but for his handiness with the pistols. He fought four men one morning before breakfast, and wounded them all,—don't you remember, O'Leary?" Mr. Malony added, turni ng to the electioneering agent, *en chef*.

"Aye, faith, Mr. Malony, but he was left for dead himself you recollect."

"I know he was; but what does that signify? He gained his return by it, and never would else; for the opposite party, by bribing, and tricking, and telling lies, of one kind or other, had contrived to get eight hundred ahead of us, and we had but three days left to pull up. Well, my Lord, the mob got outrageous when they heard Mr. Wilmot was badly wounded, and they threatened to burn the town, if he died without being elected. In all your life you never saw such a row; the women running about screeching, and clapping their hands, and swearing they'd have the lives of them that took his; the men shouting, and cursing like mad. I had my skull fractured by the way, but only in a mistake, you know, the poor fellows took me for somebody else."

"Pleasant mistake!" thought his Lordship.

"Well, Mr. Malony, and how did it all end?"

"Oh, as well as possible, my Lord: the army was called out, but the Colonel was a friend of ours, and behaved very handsomely, so we beat the other party fairly out of the town, and Mr. Wilmot was elected that very day."

"Mr. Malony, I beg pardon for interrupting you," said Father John; "hadn't we better see after them M'Alpines; they'll slip through our fingers else. I was thinking of going myself into the ——— booth, to watch them as they come in, and know the truth at once."

This idea met universal approbation, and accordingly, Father John hurried to the ——— booth, the stronghold of the M'Alpine interest.

A batch of the suspected freeholders had arrived before him, and a ragged, half-starved, miserable-looking creature, was now undergoing the usual interrogatives by the deputy-assessor.

"Who do I vote for, is it? I vote for —— for, —— by my conscience, then, I can't remember the name just at this present minute. Misther Fahy, Misther Fahy! which of 'em is it you tould me to vote for?" demanded the puzzled freeholder, in a stage-whisper.

"Archer. Hav'nt I been able to bate that into your head yet, ye omadhoun?" enquired, in his turn, Mr. M'Alpine's confidential man of bnsiness.

"Omadhoun! Misther Fahy?" repeated the voter: "faith, an' the cutest boy in the county, 'ud be bothered when he's never tould two days runnin' the same thing:—one time I'm to vote for the English Lord; then I am'nt, but it's for Misther Archer I'm to vote. How are we to know what's wanting of us at all?"

This dialogue excited shouts of jeering laughter from the Warringdon party, and cries of "Success to ye! your scholar does you credit, Misther Fahy! he's a nate boy at his A B C."

"Silence!" cried the deputy-assessor. "Your vote, my honest man."

"Archer! why don't you spake out at onst, ye ohnshuch?" whispered Mr. Fahy, angrily, in the ear of his very stupid, and now somewhat sulky, pupil.

"Oh, it's for the English Lord he's goin' to vote," loudly and scoffingly laughed the Warringdons.

"By the powers! then, it isn't. I'll vote for neither of 'em;—but for my own masther, Mr. M'Alpine, and nobody else," replied the persecuted and displeased freeholder.

"Mr. M'Alpine is not a candidate, my honest man," replied the deputy-assessor.

"Well, for Miss Kitty, then!"

This answer was received with shouts of laughter by the Warringdons, and with muttered curses by the Archers.

"Ladies are never elected to serve in Parliament, my honest man. You must, therefore, take your choice of the three candidates in question, Viscount Warringdon, Mr. Fitzgerald, and Mr. Archer; and make up your mind at once, if you please, for you are stopping the poll all this time."

"Faith! an' with the blessing of God, I won't stop it any longer," and the indignant voter turned suddenly round and took to his heels."

He was succeeded by another of the batch, who got through his lesson more creditably to himself and Mr. Fahy.

"My blessing to ye, Phanick O'Dea!" said Father John, "how long is it since you turned Protestant?"

"Me turn Protestan', is it, Father John! The Lord save us!" and Phanick crossed himself reverentially. "Sure I'm no Protestan', nor one belongin' to me; the Heavens betwixt us an' harum!"

"If you arn't a Protestant, and a bitther black one, too, how do ye come to vote for the Orange candidate, my man?"

"Avoch, Father John, sure it isn't of own will we're voting! Didn't Pat Sullivan threaten to burn the houses over our heads, and banish us the place, if we didn't vote the way we were ordered?"

"An' how would we stand the counthry, Father John, if we didn't? Always in arrears of rint, you know."

Phanick twisted his hat between his fingers, shifted from one leg to the other, and was silent a moment.

"It isn't for the likes of us, you know, your Reverence, to be faulting him, whatever he'd do: sure he'd sweep us off the face of the earth if we didn't do his biddin'!"

"But do ye know it is his biddin,' Phanick?"

"Sure, if it wasn't, would Pat Sullivan be goin' on the way he was, sthrivin' to get us down, and threatenin' our lives, if we wouldn't be said by him?"

"Meehelleen! Mavourneen! are ye there?" Father John cried, turning towards the crowd of Castle Wilmot freeholders and idlers, who crowded the booth.

The same little bare-legged, red-headed boy, already introduced to our readers, obeyed the summons, and, after having performed his customary *salam* of pulling forward his hair, and scraping his foot, awaited deferentially the priest's commands.

"Meehelleen, be off this minute, as fast as ye can set foot to the ground, to Lord Warringdon's committee-room, and"——

And Meehelleen was galloping off, when recalled by Father John.

"Come back, ye little omadhoun! is it goin' ye are without knowin' what it is ye are goin' for?" He continued—"go to the committee-room, and tell Mr. Malony I want to speak to him immediately. Now away with ye, my man!"

In a few minutes Meehelleen re-appeared, ushering in Mr. Maloney.

"Well, Father John, what is it?"

"Which of us was right about M'Alpine? Here are his men voting for Archer, and by his orders, as I have found out by one of 'themselves.'"

"Ha! I wouldn't doubt him, the slippery rascal!" exclaimed Mr. Malony. "Where in the world did I leave the challenge?" he continued, searching his pockets. "Oh, I forgot, it is in the committee-room. Meehelleen! run and tell Mr. O'Leary to get an express ready directly for Mount Pleasant, and to send him after me to Lord Warringdon's committee-room. The only way to deal with such a fellow as M'Alpine is to frighten him, Father John; or, if he is not to be frightened, shoot him like a dog."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE answer to the hostile message arrived in due course, and was as follows:—

"MY LORD—You appear to me to have made an extraordinary mistake, for I am under no promise to support you, nor ever was; you must remember I always declined engaging myself. It is true that I have declared my intention of voting for you, but I never bound myself by a distinct promise. A declaration is one thing—a promise another. Such being the state of the case between us, I have promised to support Mr. Archer, and cannot see how, in so, doing, I deserve the imputation contained in your Lordship's favour, received this day, of 'dishonourable conduct.' However, as you, have been led, as you say, to depend upon my support, I will manage thus:—I give my personal vote (as I have promised) to Mr.

Archer, and my people I leave to themselves.—I have the honour to remain, &c."

"It is all right, you see," observed the young Viscount, not sorry to be rid of a pistolling match, to his friends assembled in full divan.

"All right, my Lord! all right? any thing but that;—all wrong, you mean!" exclaimed Mr. Malony.

"Why, does he not leave his men to themselves? and is not that just what we wanted?" asked the candidate.

"Oh, the schemer! doesn't he know well they dare not go against his orders, already given? And the poltroon won't fight! you see how he backs out of that! I don't know what we are to do with him, at all," said Mr. Malony, rather despondingly.

"Never mind now, don't be one bit uneasy," interposed Father John; "but give me the letter, and I'll go among the tenants. Leave M'Alpine with me, Mr. Malony, and I'll settle him, I promise you."

And now what had been only noise and confusion, became wild tumult, and deafening roar. The freed freeholders of the M'Alpine estate, found their newly accorded liberty of thinking and acting for themselves a perilous as well as puzzling privilege; beset on one side by Father John's eloquence, and the Warringdon shillelagh; and on the other, by Mr. Archer's money, and fear of their master.

"Do you want to deny your religion, ye unfortunate, misguided cratures?" Father John cried; "oh, that ever I should live to see a man of my flock voting for an Orange candidate and Protestant ascendancy; and the downfall of their own ancient, thrue, and holy religion! and when I'll be witness agin ye at the last day, that I warned ye, but that ye wouldn't give heed to me, how will it be with ye then, boys?"

"Avoch, Father John, bad enough! sure we'd be said by you afore the world, and why not, only for the masther, but Father John? Oh! if we displase him, how will it be with us at all, and our long wake little families?"

"But don't ye see his writing, boys?—what more would ye have! Sure he leaves you to plaze yourselves—doesn't he, my men?"

His auditors, however, still hesitated.

"If he shouldn't mane what he says, Father John?"

"Och, is it making a liar of your masther, ye are?" queried the orator with a half laugh.

"God help us!" they groaned. "Well, Father John, we'll do your biddin', and vote for the English Lord."

"Do at your peril!" would say Mr. Fahy. "Do, and I'll dhrive every mother son of ye, not a baste ye have, that shan't be in the pound twenty-four hours after you give that vote."

"Ohra, murdher! what's to become of us at all!" cried the poor trembling wretches.

And then an electioneering agent for Archer would whisper, "A couple of pounds a head, boys, an' the best of ating and drinking, what do ye say to that?"

"Which way do ye vote, ye vellains of the world?" the Jim Naughten's boys, and the Castle Wilmot's would roar, whirling their "ferrals."

"For ye, for ye!" cried they, more influenced by the dread of hell-fire in prospect, and of a sound drubbing at the moment, than by love of money, or even fear of being made houseless.

"Success to ye! glory to ye! hurrah for the thrue and staunch friends of their religion; high for the M'Alpines!" the Warringdons shouted.

"Ye impident blackguards! ye shall pay for this—take my word for it, every identical man o' ye!" the infuriated agent vociferated. And, perceiving some signs of vacillation of purpose in the crowd, he added:

"If there are any among ye, will stand by their master, and their cabins, and the bastes, and their children, let 'em come over to my side!"

A few answered the appeal.

"Ah the renegades! the apostates! the vellains;" the Castle Wilmots howled, as they rushed on the small and terrified band.

The yells and shrieks became so appalling, and there occurred so many bleeding heads and fractured fingers, that the military were called out, to restore order; and indeed, after shooting two or three, and wounding twice as many more, the military partially succeeded in this object.

But the M'Alpines took advantage of the general confusion, "to slip away unknown," and return quietly to their own homes, leaving the Archers and Warringdons to dispute as to whom they by right belonged: and great was the astonishment and indignation of both parties, when they discovered the absence of the objects of their contention.

The Warringdons did not, however, take any step to bring back the fugitives, inasmuch as their previous anxiety to gain them had been prompted rather by a desire to detach them from Archer (who had no chance of succeeding but through the M'Alpine interest) than by any want of an accession of voters.

But the Archers were determined not to resign, without a struggle, their only hope; so a deputation of gentlemen of that party immediately set off in pursuit of the flying freeholders, escorted by a detachment of military to protect them through "the enemy's country."

They overtook the run-a-ways not far from a village on the Castle Wilmot estate: and first they tried persuasion, then threats; and were proceeding to blows, when the M'Alpines ran for refuge into the village, and the Archer gentlemen, knowing that its male inhabitants were absent at the election, fearlessly pursued them to their retreat, and had already managed to secure a dozen of the less fleet-footed of the poor fellows, when, to their surprise, yells and execrations rose on all sides, and presently there issued from each house, a shrieking, cursing fury, with her dark hair hanging about her shoulders, and her apron full of stones.

"Bad luck to ye, souls an' bodies! how dare ye come next or nigh us! d'ye think becase our min isn't in it, that ye'll not find them that are able for ye? Be off this minute, or by the powers, we'll make ye! be off! and don't dare lay your hand on them dacent, quiet boys, or we won't lave a skreed o' ye together!" So screamed these fair defenders of the Castle Wilmot territory, and of its right to protect those who claimed sanctuary in it.

The gentlemen, in defiance of these threats, continued to advance, and the Amazons immediately saluted them with a volley of stones; and one of the party was knocked off his horse. The women huzzaed, and the gentlemen swore.

"Read the Riot Act!" commanded one of the Archers, who was a magistrate.

"To the Divil with yourselves and your Riot Act! ye mane-spirited polthroons! ye Orange vellains!" cried the ladies, and they continued to scream, curse, and fling stones.

"Fire, sir, on that mob of rioters!" said the magistrate above mentioned, to the officer commanding the detachment.

"Not where the only rioters are women, sir," replied the young military man.

"Fire on the men, then!"—said the magistrate.

"The men are perfectly quiet, standing with their arms folded, looking on. I could not possibly fire under such circumstances. My duty only is to protect you!"

"Then, why do you not protect us?" demanded the Archer gentlemen.

"I should if the assailants were men," replied the young officer. "But what can I do with a mob of women?"

"Hurrah for the red-coats!" shouted the fair rioters, who had stood quiet and silent, while doubtful as to the result of the colloquy between the civil and military authorities; "long life to 'em! 'tis them that knows how to trate the women! not like them cadgers from the town beyant;—them murdhering villains of process sarvers, that's thinkin' to get inside of the masther's son-in-law, the schamers of the world!—"

"It's a long march ye tuk, sir," said the speaker-woman and ringleader of the party, turning to the officer. "May be you would like a dhrop of whiskey and a fresh egg, or some throut out of the river, or a roasted pratee?—If we had betther, we'd give it, but whatever it is, you have the 'cead mille faltha!' with it, any how; and something for your men too, the craturs."

The officer thankfully assented to the proposal, and there was a temporary cessation of hostilities.

"Make 'em give us back our min, sir," said the Amazon, coaxingly; "do, and the Lord prosper ye! we won't pelt 'em any more, an' we'll give 'em something to ate into the bargin, for they're starving wid the hunger, God help 'em! Will ye, *agra*, give us back them poor craturs?"

The good humoured young man laughed, and promised his mediation; but the gentlemen scornfully rejected the terms, and had therefore to return faint for want of food, and harassed by the women who hung on their rear, pelting and cursing to the very outskirts of the town, which they regained nearly half dead, from fotigue, hunger, and bruises. Here they conducted the freeholders at an eating-house, where they were ordered "lashings of mate and whiskey," in exchange for their liberty.

"This is eligant fine ating, to be sure Thady," observed one of them,—"but how will it be with us whin we go back? The Castle Wilmots will murdher us!"

"Faith, they will so," said Jim Naughten, who happened just then to walk in, ostensibly to make love to a daughter of the woman of the house, who was a cousin of his own, but truth obliges us to state our belief that his visit was rather diplomatic than gallant. Be that as it may, it is more his cousin's affair than ours.

"Faith, you may be sure," continued this Job's comforter, "of as fine a bating as ever ye got in your lives;—I wish I was as sure of a fine estate. Ye must have grate courage, boys, to think of standin' the counthry at all, after doing what ye're goin' to do. Not a fair, nor patthern, ye won't get murdhered at,—an', if you want a hundherd of malt, or a stone of salt, or if your wife has a

lock of wool, or a thrifle of flax to sell, troth ye must do without it, or be comin' down every hand's turn by wather, for fear of the Castle Wilmot boys."

"We know that, as well as ye can tell us, Jim," groaned his auditors. "But if we vote agin the masther's ordhers, sorrow a thing we'll have to buy or sell at all. Didn't we run out of the town to get quit of 'em all, an' didn't the Archers bring the army a top of us, weren't we made prisioners?"

"Why did ye let 'em?"

"Why did ye let 'em, is it? asy said, Jim, but troth, if ye were in it yoursel' you w'd find it far harder to help, than you think for. I don't care a ha'porth about a sthroke of a stick, becase I'm used to it ever since I was small, but the baynet, Jim, is a quare thing, I wouldn't like a prod of it at-all-at-all."

"Pooh, what harum would it do you?" asked Jim. "See how the Castle Wilmot women were not afear'd of it."

"Why would they? whatever they done, they knew well, the sogers wouldn't touch 'em."

"Well, no matther for that now," Jim interrupted. "What do ye intend to do, boys?"

"What do we intend doin' is it? We intend doin' whatever we can't help doin', Jim!"

"Lads, will ye vote for Archer?"

"What else can we do, when the masther bids us, you know? Troth, if we don't, he'll sell our skins, let alone our bastes!"

"He won't be long over ye, any how," replied Jim.

"How's that?" demanded his auditors, eagerly.

"Don't ye know that Letterbrough is a lase of the Castle Wilmot lands, that Mr. M'Alpine's father held for three lives; two of 'em are up, an' the last one is an ould woman that's dying every year of rheumatics; so ye never can tell the minute ye'll come back to your raal masther. He's the one you ought to mind;—the one that owns the land, is'nt it boys?—The man that, whether tinant or no, if ye were brought up before the grand jury, for being too fond of mutton, or too ready with the stick, would stand your friend, whin your own masther, as you call him, w'd be sittin' fair an' asy by his parlour fire, writin' love letters, or readin' out of a book; an' a negur he is into the bargain, that begrudges a dacent boy that w'd be goin' the road, his bit an' sup, an' a mouthful of hay for his bastes!"

"A thin would he, Jim?" interrogated the much-shocked Letterbroughs.

"A thin would he?" repeated Jim, deridingly;"—Don't ye know he would?—Didn' he do it by mysel', an', bad manners to him! But no matther about that now, I wasn't thrustin' to him, thank God! for mate or dhrink; I had my own masther to go to, the Lord be praised. The man that has a sate by his fire, for who's would come in, and lashings of the best of ating an' dhrinking. An' a *cead mille faltha*, an' a tap on the shouldher into the bargain. An' all this you have good rason to know, boys, for many's the time we sat together in his chimney corner, an' himsel' in the kitchen talkin' to us as free as if we were gintlemin."

"We know that too, Jim," interrupted the freeholders; "sure there is'nt his aqual in the country round, for the kind heart an' the open hand; an' if t'was himsel' that was standin', Jim, d'ye think we'd refuse him our sowls, let alone our votes? No, troth, we'd pitch M'Alpine to the Devil for him, an' why not, but,"—

"That's right, boys," said Jim, not allowing the speaker to finish his sentence.—"I'm sure you would, but you know his son-in-law is himsel' in a manner. Behave the way ye ought now, an' I promise you, that you won't lose by it;—supposin' itsel' that M'Alpine banishes you off the lands, hasn't the masther room an' to spare for ye, an' half the country besides?"

"But what will we do? the Archers have a hould of us now, Jim," replied Jim's auditors, hesitatingly.

"Well, stay with them, sure, but," he added laughing, "vote for us."

"Oh, yea! how will that be at all?" queried the astonished M'Alpines.

"I'll make ye sensible of it to-morrow, boys," replied the orator. "I'll be with ye early, by the first light, an' now God be wid ye!" And so saying, Jim walked off, shouting his favourite tune of "Tattered Jack Welsh," his only regret being, that Winny was not present to be "grigged" by it.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE following morning the Letterbrough freeholders were conveyed through the town in carriages escorted by gentlemen mounted and armed, the mob roaring "Warringdon for ever! high for the

English Lord! Warringdon and emancipation! Down with the Archers! the Orangemen! down with M'Alpine the thraitor! down with 'em all! to the Divil with the whole of 'em!" accompanying this kind consignment of Mr. Archer and his friends by throwing hands full of mud, dead cats, and, occasionally, a stone or two, at the carriage, venturing, however, rather cautiously on the last mark of disapprobation, being deterred by the pistols which peeped from the bosoms of the Archers.

At length the cavalcade reached their destination, and the freeholders were ushered into the —— booth. They were received with loud plaudits by the Archer party, and cries of "Fine fellows! true to their landlord!" and by groans and hisses, curses and ferocious scowls, and muttered threats, by the Warringdons.

"Don't suffer yourselves to be intimidated, my honest men," said Mr. Archer's agent. "The Warringdon party may threaten, but they dare not injure you. Mr. Wilmot is a mighty great man, no doubt," he continued sneeringly, "and his tenants are fine bludgeoneers. But never you mind, the king happens to be a greater man than Mr. Wilmot; and as for his tenants, the first among them that lifts a stick against ye shall be lodged in the county jail."

"Aye, aye!" shouted the Castle Wilmots, in derision, "when you've caught us! Once we are on our own mountains, d'ye think we'll be aisily had? Oh yea! what a chance you have of us! An' so ye think we'll wait for your lave to rise our sticks;—ye're comical fellows, troth!'

"Silence, silence!" the deputy-assessor called out. "Come, my lads, your votes, whatever they are; give them at once, and don't be afraid."

"We won't, sir," replied a little crabbed, half-starved looking man, advancing from the group.

"What is your name?" asked the deputy-assessor.

"Thady Sullivan."

"Are you twenty-one years of age?"

"Twenty-one years of age, is it?" repeated Thady. "Faith, I wish I was thrustin' to that same! I am so, and a good many years to the back of it, more's the pity."

"Are you a freeholder of the county?"

"Sure, if I wasn't, I wouldn't be here!" answered Thady.

"Have you the clear yearly sum of forty shillings, over and above your rent?"

"Is it that jail-bird?" interrupted the Warringdon agent. "Put him the freeholder's oath!"

The freeholder's oath was administered, and after that, as demanded by the Warringdon party, the bribery oath also, and now, having no more plausible objections to make, they suffered the man to proceed.

"Whom do you vote for?" asked the deputy-assessor.

"I vote for Lord Wardherdown," said Thady.

"Warringdon? repeated the deputy-assessor, surprised.

"Warringdon!" echoed the Archer party, with rage and astonishment. "Infamous cheating!—shameful! shameful! to put between landlord and tenant. Setting the county in a blaze! rebels! traitors!"

"Hurrah! hurrah!" the Warringdons shouted. "Thady Sullivan for ever! chair him! chair him!"

And accordingly they carried Thady on their shoulders round the room.

His example was followed by his companions; and as they were walking off, accompanied by the laughter and acclamations of one party, and execration of the other, Thady turned towards the Archers, and making a low bow, "Thank ye, gentlemen, for the mate an' the dhrink, an' the fine jaunt in yer grand carriages, and for all the honour ye ped us—ye see, we tuk your advice, and wern't afeard to spake out."

"Let me pass; let me pass, boys;" said O'Reilly, impatiently pushing through the shouting crowd. "Where's Mr. Malony?"

"Here!" cried the object enquired for, advancing, and still laughing at the trick just played by Thady and his compeers. "But what is the matter, O'Reilly? you look bothered—is anything going wrong?"

"Yes! Lord Templemore is polling for Archer in the barony of ——"

Malony's broad, good-humoured face darkened.

"That's one way of standing neuter, and be d—d to him! Hollo! one of ye there, Castle Wilmots! give me my hat!" he vociferated. "I'll just step to the committee-room, and see what's best to be done."

All agreed that the thing best to be done was that a deputation of their party, headed by Mr. Malony, should wait without loss of time on the noble Lord at his residence, a few minutes' walk from the Warringdon committee-room.

As these broad-shouldered, formidable supporters of Lord Warringdon defiled one after another, Mr. Malony bringing up the rear, into Lord Templemore's library, he was observed to change colour.

He received them very courteously, however, and expressed much regret at seeing Mr. Malony's arm in a sling.

"I am much obliged to your Lordship," replied Mr. Malony; "luckily 'tis only my left arm; I have my right one still, for a case of need, whenever it comes!"—and Mr. Malony squared his shoulders—and Lord Templemore hemmed.

"My Lord," continued Mr. Malony, who had been selected as spokesman of the party, "we have come here this morning on very particular business; to remind you, in fact, on the part of Lord Warringdon, of a circumstance you seem to have forgotten,—namely—your promise of standing neuter between him and Mr. Archer—giving plumpers to Mr. Fitzgerald. Have you kept that promise, my Lord?"

"I am not in the habit of breaking my promises, Mr. Malony," replied Lord Templemore with much dignity.

"I don't know what your habits may be, my Lord; but there must be a beginning, to every habit, you know, and *that* beginning, it appears to me, you are making on the present occasion."

"How do you prove that, Mr. Malony?" the Earl asked.

"Why, my Lord, you are this very minute giving your second voices to Archer, in the barony of —"

"I beg your pardon, I have not given my vote at all."

"You mean your personal vote, my Lord?" asked Mr. Malony.

His Lordship bowed assent.

"Oh, my Lord, that would be a very good answer in a court of law; but it won't do in a court of honour," said Mr. Malony, smiling somewhat contemptuously. "Your tenants are not standing neuter, and, therefore, your personal neutrality goes for nothing."

"I am not responsible for my tenants, Sir," replied Lord Templemore.

"I am afraid your Lordship will find some difficulty in persuading Lord Warringdon and his friends that you are not," answered, Mr. Malony, accompanying the observation by a look to which the Earl hastened to reply.

"My dear Sir, allow me to explain to you my position with respect to my tenantry in the barony you allude to. They all hold under leases; pay their rent to a day; are never in arrears; in a word, are comfortable, and therefore independent. Well, my property in that neighbourhood borders that of Mr. Archer, and my people say that they will not incur the enmity of the tenantry of an estate close to them, for a stranger like Lord Warringdon, to whom they have no local attachment. In fact, my dear Sir, they have

broke loose, the rascals! but they know they are not in my power, and I cannot control them, or—"

"That may be all very true, my Lord," interrupted Mr. Malony, "but all your tenantry are not next neighbours of Mr. Archer's. Give us an equivalent to those that have polled for him in some other barony."

"Most willingly," his Lordship assented eagerly; "or I will consent even to double the number; will that satisfy you, as to my impartiality?"

"Would your Lordship have any objection to state this arrangement in writing?" asked a cautious member of the deputation.

"My word, Sir,"—and the Earl was proceeding in a dignified strain, when interrupted by Mr. Malony.

"Certainly—there's no necessity for any stronger guarantee, my Lord."

Lord Templemore acknowledged the compliment by a bow and smile.

"For," continued Mr. Malony, with a meaning look, "*I* hold the promise."

He shook hands with the Earl, and departed with his train.

CHAPTER XX.

A FEW mornings after the conversation just detailed, Mr. Malony, Mr. O'Reilly, Mr. O'Leary, and half a dozen other friends and partizans, rushed into Lady Anne's drawing-room, shouting out, "Good news—good news! the contest, we may say, is over: the barony of ——, where Archer's chief force lies, will close in an hour; his men have been beaten back by the mob, so there have been but ten polled there as yet to-day, therefore by four o'clock it must all be over. We are watching them well, for fear they should personate from other baronies, and have left some fellows in the booth to kick up rows, and retard the polling. An express has just been sent off to Mr. Wilmot, to prevent his sending down any more men."

And now what shaking of hands, and wishing joy, followed this announcement, between the young Viscount, who had been since breakfast by the side of the gentle Isabel; (a delightful refuge from

his noisy committee-room and his constituents.) How blandly his mother-in-law elect thanked! how sweetly his fair mistress smiled! how proud and gratified she looked! In a word, how delighted every body was with themselves and with one another. What shouts of triumph and self-gratulation rang through the house! How they did talk and laugh! what joy! what noise! what vociferation! what gesticulation! Oh, the mirth and good humour of successful Irish Electioneerers! Is there any mirth or good humour like it?"

An hour had thus passed unheeded, when Mr. Malony suddenly exclaimed, "There comes Father John! I left him in the booth, to bring me word the moment it should close. Hurrah!"

And he rushed to the hall-door, in his impatience to have all the particulars.

"When did it close?" he bawled, Father John not having yet come within speaking distance.

"'Tisn't closed at all," repeated the other.

"What then, man?"

"Opened!" said the priest.

"Opened!" repeated his interrogator, with a look of consternation. "What do you mean, Father John?"

"Why then, indeed, Mr. Malony, I mean just what I say. You know the men Lord Templemore promised us, to make up for those he gave Archer? Well, 'tis by them the booth has been kept open, and they have a batch of two hundred for to-morrow, who stole in to-day, while nobody was watching, thinking the election over."

And now who can describe the rage and disappointment of Malony and the Warringdon party, lately so triumphant, at this blight of their hopes.

"The rascal!" cried Malony, stamping. "You must send him a challenge immediately."

"Oh, yes, yes! of course—cannot possibly be avoided!" simultaneously chimed in all the men present, forgetting in their eagerness the presence of the ladies.

Mr. Malony found his arm suddenly grasped.

"Do you want to kill him, Mr. Malony? Do you—do you?" Isabel asked, trembling with agitation.

"I do not," he quietly replied; "but I want to return him."

"I had rather he was never returned," she said, wringing her hands, "than that he should run that risk."

"My God, Miss Wilmot, I wonder at you! A sensible girl, like

you, to talk in this way. Sure he isn't made of glass! he must stand his chance the same as others. Just take my advice, and go away quietly with your mother, and leave us to settle the business properly. This is no place for you; come now, go away, like a good girl!"

"No!" she replied, "I'll not stir—I will *not* leave him to be murdered by you."

"Murdered by me!" Malony repeated, highly affronted. "*That* is not exactly the way you should speak to one of your father's warmest friends, and for his sake, perhaps the most zealous supporter Lord Warringdon has. Murdered, indeed!"

"Oh, I am too miserable to know what I am saying:" And Isabel sank on the first seat near her, looking indeed most "miserable."

Now, Mr. Malony could contemplate man's blood with much more philosophy than he could woman's tears, and his heart softened directly.

"I proposed his fighting entirely to serve him, God knows! For that matter, as Lord Templemore made the promise to me, personally, I have the best right to call upon him to keep it. So now, shake hands, and don't say I want to murder him, at any rate," he added, smiling good humouredly.

"But why should it be you, either. Why should any one of you fight? The damage is done, and you can't repair it now," said Isabel. "Leave it all as it is. This duelling is such a frightful and savage custom!"

"You! your father's daughter, and be frightened by pistols? You are going to be a disgrace to the county; and I am not at all sorry you are about to transplant yourself among the quiet English," replied Malony, laughing.

He and the other gentlemen soon after withdrew, leaving the Viscount and his gentle mistress together, who, by the way, never appeared to him half so gentle or interesting as at that moment. Was it because she leaned her head so affectionately on his shoulder, and murmured forth his name with such whispering tenderness? Or was it merely because he approved and admired her womanly abhorrence of duelling?

And now let us follow the movements of Mr. Malony and his belligerent companions. A second visit to Lord Templemore was immediately decided upon, and a certain Mr. M'Carthy was deputed to remonstrate in Mr. Malony's name, on his breach of promise.

The noble Earl alleged he had kept his word.

"Yes, my Lord, but in such a manner that you have done us harm instead of good. Were it not for you, the contest would now be over," replied Mr. M'Carthy.

"Not being aware of the politics of your committee-room, I could not possible imagine that giving you forty votes would be an injury to your cause," replied the Earl.

Mr. M'Carthy smiled incredulously. "Every body, my Lord, knew that our object was to close that booth. Will you give it under your hand, that you alone of the whole town were ignorant of it? and that you had no conversation on the subject with Mr. Archer?

"My verbal assertion is sufficient, I should think, Sir."

"Not in Mr. Malony's opinion, this time, my Lord," M'Carthy retorted.

"I certainly will not give any other voucher, Sir," the Earl answered, reddening with displeasure.

"Then, in that case, my Lord, I am directed by Mr. Malony to demand satisfaction for what he considers an intentional injury on your Lordship's part," said Mr. M'Carthy.

"I have done what I promised," insisted Lord Templemore, "and I will not suffer myself to be provoked into a quarrel with Mr. Malony, because he happens to be in an ill humour. My life is far too valuable to my family to risk it in an idle brawl, with a hot-headed young man like Mr. Malony."

"That is your answer, my Lord."

"That is my answer, Mr. M'Carthy."

"I am afraid, then, that such an answer will not satisfy Mr. Malony, and that he may consider himself obliged to give your Lordship a rather unpleasant proof of his opinion of your conduct," said Mr. M'Carthy, rising and moving towards the door.

"Mr. Malony had better take care how he subjects himself to a law process," Lord Templemore observed, as he rang the bell.

His Lordship immediately discovered he had very particular business at Mount Pleasant, and was stepping into his carriage, about an hour after the above conversation, when he felt a whip gently applied to his shoulders; and looking round, beheld his broken-promise-holder, Mr. Malony.

"I don't repeat the blow, my Lord, because you are a man double my age, and I don't want to do you bodily harm; but only to degrade you, as that man deserves who does an injury underhand, and refuses giving the only satisfaction in his power. "Now, take notice, all of ye," he continued, turning to the crowd of idlers as-

sembled round the carriage, and loitering about the street, "that I have laid a whip across Lord Templemore's shoulders." So saying he walked away, whistling, and tapping his boot with the said whip.

Soon after, nothing was talked of all over the town, but the approaching hostile meeting between the flogger and floggee. Happily, however, the constituted authorities interfered, and the parties were bound over, in recognizances of a thousand pounds each, to keep the peace; and so, much to the mortification of all "whom it did *not* concern," there the matter ended.

We wish that Lord Templemore's treachery had produced no worse consequences than that of personal degradation to himself; but, unluckily, through his prevaricating conduct, he had not only been the means of keeping open a booth which the Warringdon party wanted to close, but there was now a strong probability that, owing to him, a booth would close, which they wanted to keep open.

In expectation of the election being immediately terminated by the event first alluded to, the Warringdons had neglected having the necessary supply of men, to keep up the ball, in the great barony of ——; the strong-hold, in the fact, of the Castle Wilmot interest; that closed, all was over; they would lose two thousand voters.

"Now it became the Archers' turn to laugh, and jeer, and triumph, and the Warringdons to look crest-fallen.

"Never mind, all is not lost yet," said Malony, as he and several of his party sat round Lady Anne's dinner table. "Give me the swiftest horse you have, and I start this night for Castle Wilmot. I shall be there by dawn of day to-morrow, and you will see me return with enough of your men and my own, to take the town, if we wanted it."

Mr. Malony kept his word, and next day returned, followed by hundreds of triumphant partisans, with pipers playing before them, and laurel branches in their hats; shouting "High for Derrymanogaslogh! who'll dare say the contrary?" In consequence, the booth was kept from being closed on that day, and by the next, they had so overpowering a majority, that Mr. Archer withdrew opposition, and Viscount Warringdon and Mr. Fitzgerald were declared by the High Sheriff "duly elected, as Knights of the Shire, for the county of ——."

CHAPTER XXI.

ARE not our readers as wearied of the noise and confusion of an Irish election, as our Viscount himself? We think it more than probable that they are; and therefore will spare them the added noise and confusion of the chairing. Yet we do so reluctantly. There is something to our mind so gloriously characteristic of the Irish people, in their true, deep-felt, deep-toned, joyous, affectionate, energetic huzza for a popular candidate; the windows are crowded with ladies, many of them young and pretty, and all good-humoured (that day at least,) waving their handkerchiefs; and the candidate looking up at them, as he sits enthroned on the shoulders of the people, and bowing so graciously, and his friends on either side of him, holding banners; and all above and beneath, and around him, shouting his name. Is there a situation in human life, more pardonably intoxicating to human vanity than this? at least to a country gentleman in Ireland, where the desire for popularity, and the sensibility to it are so strong.

The day was closed by a grand dinner given by his friends and constituents, in honour of the new member; at which there was a great deal of drinking and speechifying; and the following evening the Viscount returned the compliment by a ball, and supper, for the special purpose of thanking the ladies of his party. And such a gay ball! There were all the officers of the garrison at it, and two very dashing Captains of Dragoons;—a God-send, by the way, for which the ladies were indebted to Mr. Archer, that gentleman having applied for two troops of horse to ride down the riotous Castle Wilmots. Captains of dragoons being rarities, the town of C—— not having the advantage of being a cavalry station; they naturally attracted the brightest eyes in the room. Then there was Mr. Malony, and Mr. M'Carthy, and a number of other young, laughing, dancing men of good property; and the young member himself, all gallantry and politeness; and the charming Lady Anne, soft and ingratiating as usual; and Isabel, who seemed that night to tread on air, her step so bounding, and her countenance so radiant with happiness; the happiness of loving, and being beloved; and perhaps with a little vanity, too. Her lover was an admired and popular man, the object for the time of engrossing and flattering attention—and a few days more, and she would be his bride!—a Viscountess, too!—happy, happy Isabel.

"I never saw her looking so well!" observed the lover to the mamma, with a warmth and earnestness of admiration, almost Irish.

"Humph! the same as usual, I think—I can't say, that I see much difference," replied the mother, carelessly.

Somebody who overheard this answer, thought it extraordinary. It is clear the person, whoever he, or she was, did not thoroughly comprehend our friend Lady Anne.

"Where is Miss Wilmot to-night? I hope she is not ill," said several people in the course of that evening, to the young lady's mamma.

"No, thank God! not at all, but she preferred remaining with an invalid friend," and Lady Anne coughed. or smiled, and somewhat ostentatiously changed the subject. Of course, each enquirer either already knew, or speedily discovered, that Mr. Barham was the friend alluded to, and naturally enough concluded there must be "something in it," or Lady Anne, the pink of propriety, would never permit her daughter to remain almost alone with a young man; nor would her daughter be inclined to lose a ball, for the best mere friend she had in the world. The approaching marriage of Mr. Barham and Maria Wilmot, therefore became buzzed about the room; some, in their zeal to prove their assertions, insisting that they had the information from Mr. Barham himself; others gave Lady Anne as their authority; others Maria Wilmot, and so on, but all were sure of the fact; and the mother of the bride-elect was overwhelmed with compliments and congratulations. But she "assured her kind friends that it was all a mistake; that there really was no truth in the report, there was not, indeed!"

"Oh, come now, Lady Anne, there is no use in denying it," said Mr. Malony, "particularly to me, for I always knew how the land lay in that quarter. Well, I wish you joy; Barham is a right good fellow; just the man to make a woman happy; a capital shot, rides like the Devil, and would as soon slap a man's face, as eat his breakfast—I wish you joy from my heart! but when is it to be?"

"We have not yet quite settled the *when*," replied the Lady, smiling.

And here we would request the reader to imagine the ball over, and permit us to end our chapter.

CHAPTER XXII.

APART from all the gossip about him, would it not be an act of Christian charity, to inquire what has really become, during this long interval, of our poor wounded lover of fun, now that we have a little leisure on our hands?

As he was leaving the court-house in company with Mr. Malony, the memorable morning of the duel, he was met by Lady Anne, who enticed him home with her, by promising him some capital fun at the electioneering dinner she was to give that day.

He laughed during the evening, with all his customary energy; he, and his wounded fellow-duellist, being the noisiest revellers, and most affectionate friends of the party. But, unfortunately, he drank rather more on that occasion than was his custom; the consequence of which was, that (not being an eel, or an Irishman, and therefore not used to being skinned, or knocked on the head,) before morning he was in a burning fever, roaring about fun and pistols, and requiring Pat Murphy's and Bartly Kilfoy's united strength to keep him from jumping out of the window; during his illness, nothing could equal Lady Anne's tender and devoted attention, sitting up with him, and suffering no hand but her own to smooth his pillow, or give him his draughts. Her care was, as every body remarked, motherly, and indeed, Maria also gained much credit by her praiseworthy attentions to their young guest; for as soon as he was able to move into an adjoining apartment, converted for his convenience into a temporary sitting-room, the kind Maria had always some nice little funny story, to beguile his tedious hours of recovery, seldom or ever leaving the invalid, except for a short walk, and apparently totally uninterested in the scene of excitement which absorbed every body else.

On the morning after the ball, Mr. Barham, for the first time, since his illness, joined the family at breakfast. Lord Warringdon and Isabel soon slipped away to say some more last words, previous to his Lordship's threatened departure for London, with Mr. Wilmot, for the purpose of making the necessary preparations for the reception of his affianced bride, who was shortly to follow with her mother and sister; and Mr. Wilmot, who had just arrived, retired to learn from Pat Murphy, all the "inns and outs" of the election; so that of the group, part assembled at breakfast, there now remained but Lady Anne, Maria, and her "invalid friend."

"And so now it's over, election, chairing, and all, and I have not seen one bit of it; I, that could not sleep for a week before the poll opened, thinking of the fun I should have had—not to have had any all—isn't is too bad?" asked Barham, in a tone of good-humoured discontent.

Maria and her mother agreed than it was, indeed, a grievous misfortune.

"By the way, Miss Wilmot, I was just just thinking how very droll it is that your guess about a duel being my second adventure, should have turned out true. Isn't it very funny? how you must have laughed when you heard I was wounded. I am very sorry I didn't think of putting off my duel for a few days, just to see a little of the fun first—but I was so vexed you see, at the time, that I never thought of it. Miss Wilmot, I forget what you said my third adventure in Ireland would be?"

"To be. married, I think," replied Maria, carelessly—"was it not?"

"Oh yes, I remember; but I don't think that guess is as lucky as the other, for as I am not married yet, it isn't likely I shall be, in the few days I remain in Ireland."

"Are you going so soon?" enquired Lady Anne, her heart sinking within her at this cool announcement. "I thought you were to wait for us, and travel together."

"Why I must, you see, whether I will, or no. Sir Willoughby Turner has written me such a blowing-up, because I stay idling here; he says, instead of being at college, reading my course; and threatening he won't give me a farthing of money, till I return. 'Tisn't his money, at any rate, so he need not badger me so, for spending my own. I shall be so glad when I come of age, and can do as I like. And I shall be so sorry to go! I don't know what I shall do with myself, when I return to England, I shall find it so stupid. I never, in all my life, was so happy as I have been here, nor met such good-nature. As for your kindness, Lady Anne, and Miss Wilmot's, I never can forget it as long as I live—nursing me as if I was your son and brother. I shall very often think of you both. Will you not come soon and see me at Cralcourt? I shall be so delighted to see you, particularly Miss Wilmot; and you must not forget to bring all your servants, and try and persuade Father John to come, too! how glad I shall be, to be sure!'

Lady Anne looked over at her daughter, who immediately arose and left the room.

"Pray, Mr. Barham, may I ask were you serious in inviting my

daughter as a *friend* to your house?" asked his hostess, in a tone of apparently suppressed emotion.

"Oh, yes, to be sure, quite serious; I hope you have too good an opinion of me to suppose I was not perfectly in earnest, when I invited her to Cralcourt: could you possibly imagine me so ungrateful?" he asked, with warmth.

The Lady played awhile with the chain round her neck, and hemmed; at length, she said, in a constrained manner, "Mr. Barham, you have not, it seems, perceived the drift of my question."

Mr. Barham entreated her to explain; but she remained silent, and apparently, very much embarrassed, and somewhat offended.

"I am afraid I have displeased you in some way, Lady Anne, I wish you would tell me in what.

"I will be candid with you," she replied, with great seeming effort; "I am disappointed in you."

"How,—what have I done?"

"You have acted ungenerously, very ungenerously, towards a family who deserved, from you, at least, different treatment."

"What family?" the young man asked, surprised.

"Mine, Mr. Barham."

"Yours, Lady Anne? I act ungenerously towards your family! How?"

"My dear Mr. Barham, recollect yourself, I beg."

Mr. Barham did recollect himself, as desired, but in vain. After a careful review, in his own mind, of his conduct during the two months of his acquaintance with, and domestication in, the Wilmot family, he could not charge his conscience with a single act, word, or even thought, of the nature imputed to him.

"I declare, Lady Anne," he said, after a few moments' pause, "I cannot imagine what you mean;—there must be some mistake."

"It is a mistake, then, which the whole county has fallen into, as well as my self," replied the Lady, with a slightly sarcastic expression about the mouth; "for every one who saw you together, formed the same opinion."

"Saw me and whom together, Lady Anne?"

"My daughter, sir," she replied.

"And what opinion do you say they formed?" again queried the puzzled boy.

"Mr. Barham, when a gentleman pays exclusive attention to a young lady, seeking her society in preference to that of all others; and this preference continuing during months to be manifested before

strangers, as well as her own family, what is the motive generally assigned by the world for his conduct?"

"Oh, people say that he is in love with her;—but why do you ask?"

Lady Anne continued:—"And if the young Lady, considering these attentions in the light that all her acquaintances do, should become attached to the gentleman, giving him such proofs of her affection as subject her to public comment, do you think the gentleman would act generously, or even honourably, if, after all this, he invites the lady as a *friend* to his house?"

The light suddenly flashed on the bewildered Barham—"My goodness! surely you cannot mean *that*, Lady Anne?"

"Mean what?" she enquired.

"Mean that I paid attentions to Miss Wilmot, and that she———" he stopped, embarrassed.

"And that she is attached to you?" asked Lady Anne, finishing the sentence for him. "Yes, that was exactly my meaning."

"But, Miss Wilmot and I never talked a word about love in all our lives,—no, no more than I and Father John did: we used only to laugh together. I never intended,——" he hesitated again.

"I cannot possibly tell what you may have intended, my dear Mr. Barham," said Lady Anne, taking him up; "all I can know is what you have done; and all I can say is that every body who saw you together supposed you were her declared lover. Do you imagine I would otherwise have permitted her to sit, for hours, by your couch, and to remain at home and alone with you, on so remarkable an occasion as an election ball? Her absence was naturally commented upon, and then there was a laugh among the gentlemen,—'Miss Wilmot, of course, had remained with her friend, Mr. Barham:' every one asking when it was to be: I replied 'that my daughter had not taken me into her confidence, and, therefore, that I knew just as much about the matter as they did.' Either you have deceived my daughter, or she has deceived me; whichever way it is' she will now become the ridicule of all the envious misses of her acquaintance; the gay, laughing Maria Wilmot turned into a lackadaisacal young lady, condemned to wear the willow, will, of course, amazingly divert them; and, for this highly gratifying situation, she will have to thank you. Am I not, therefore, justified in saying that you have acted ungenerously towards her?"

"But how am I accountable for what people choose to say I

meant, for which I did not mean?" asked Barham, naturally enough, objecting to Lady Anne's forced inference.

"You don't feel any regret, then, at being, though unintentionally, (as you assert) the cause of injury to an amiable and confiding young person?" enquired Lady Anne. "I must, in that case, have, indeed, a bad opinion of you, and bitterly regret the day we ever met."

Poor Barham bit his lips, and knit his brows in painful and perplexing cogitation. He could not bear to think of his kind and merry friend, Maria, becoming the laughing-stock of her acquaintances, because she had so often made laughing-stocks of others for his amusement, and yet he did not relish the alternative,—namely, making her his wife.

He was still hesitating, when the door opened, and Mr. Malony appeared.

"Ah! my dear fellow, how goes it?" he said, advancing, and shaking the late sufferer cordially by the hand. "I am delighted to see you out of your room, at last, and, by the way, I don't think you ever would have come out of it at all, but for Lady Anne and Miss Wilmot."

Barham's heart smote him, and he bit his lips more energetically than before.

Lady Anne made an excuse for leaving the room.

"Well, when is it to be, Barham?" enquired Malony, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder, and smiling significantly.

"I don't understand you," replied the lover, *malgré lui.*

"Why, your wedding, to be sure!"

"My wedding?"

"Oh, come, nonsense, Barham, it's no secret now, I can tell you; the whole town knows it as well as you do yourself. There was nothing else talked of at the ball, last night. Well, I wish you joy. You could not have made a better choice."

"I wonder why he did not choose her himself, then," thought the young Englishman.

Mr. Malony continued: "A good-natured, pleasant girl, as ever lived, and devilish fond of you, she must be, to have stayed whole days in your sick room, instead of dashing about at the elections, and faith, we had a loss in her; many a man she has laughed into voting for her father. She will keep you alive, Barham."

"But, suppose, Malony, that all this should be a mistake, and that we are not going to be married, at all; what would you say, then?"

"Why, I should say it would be very odd in you, and very unlucky for her. I assure you, that both herself and mother are commented upon already, for their imprudence about you, and nothing kept the people's tongues between their teeth, at the ball, but the supposition of your engagement. Oh, no, you are too honourable a fellow for that," observed Malony.

"I am in for it, I see," said Barham to himself: he paused a moment, and then added aloud, "Well, Malony, no harm done, whatever they say, for we *are* engaged."

"To be sure, I knew you were. Have you got your guardian's consent?

"I have not yet applied for it."

"He may refuse, perhaps, thinking you too young; but you can go to Gretna, in that case, you know."

"Yes, I know," answered the "happy man."

"Here Lady Anne and her daughter re-entered the room together.

Mr. Malony walked up to Maria, and, after the usual salutation, "wished her joy."

"Of what?" she enquired, looking surprised, and, for once in her life, at least, feeling precisely as she seemed to feel; for her mother's report of the conversation with her intended lover had not, by any means, prepared her for so speedy and joyous a conclusion.

Mr. Malony laughed. "Ah, you will be Maria Wilmot, I see, to the end of the chapter. How innocent you look!"

"I really am innocent of all comprehension of your meaning, Mr. Malony," she replied.

"Confess, like the frank, honest girl you are, that you are going to be married, and not sorry for it," he added, lowering his voice into a confidential whisper.

"Well, Mr. Malony, like the frank, honest girl I am, I declare to you 'tis all a mistake, and I *am* very sorry for it," Maria answered, summoning up her usual carelessness of manner.

"All a mistake! that's just what Barham himself said, at first, and afterwards acknowledged it was no mistake at all;—there's never believing a word you lovers say."

Lady Anne fixed her examining look on Barham; he understood its meaning, and immediately advanced towards her.

"Lady Anne," he said, in a low voice, "I wish to speak with you."

They withdrew together to a window, and Barham continued:—

"Malony tells me, not only that every body thinks Miss Wilmot and I are engaged, but that she is even blamed for all the kindness she has shewn me; I need not say how unhappy I should be, were I the cause of injury to her; and so, I was thinking that we had better be married, since it is the general opinion that we ought. I will thank you to mention what I have said to Miss Wilmot."

"Certainly, my dear young friend," replied Lady Anne, in her most endearing manner: "and I need not say with what pleasure I shall receive you into my family. I must ever love and honour the manly and feeling mind you have, by your present decision, evinced."

Mr. Malony, after again shaking hands and wishing joy, took his leave; and Lady Anne ran to communicate the good tidings to her husband and younger daughter.

About a fortnight after Mr. Barham's proposal, Cralcourt received Maria Wilmot as its mistress; and, in another fortnight after that, the *Morning Post* announced the marriage of Viscount Warringdon, eldest son of Earl Glenville, and Isabel, second daughter of Robert Wilmot, Esq., of Castle Wilmot, in the county of ———, late M.P., &c. Then followed a long list of the Dukes, Marquises, Earls, and their consorts, who had partaken of the elegant *dejuner*, at the splendid mansion in Park-lane, belonging to the Earl of Rochford, uncle to the lovely, amiable, and accomplished bride: and it was also further stated, for the instruction of the world at large, that the happy pair had set off, immediately after the ceremony, for Sutton Park, the seat of Earl Glenville, where they were to remain during the honey-moon.

CHAPTER XXII.

Lady Warringdon was a beauty, a *bel esprit*, a leader of fashion,—was she happy?

We will answer that question by asking the reader to imagine four years elapsed since the event which closed our last chapter, and accompany us to the same London mansion in which we opened our tale, and enter with us an apartment which bears the stamp of female occupancy. The piano stands open—the harp uncovered—a guitar is carelessly thrown aside on an ottoman—richly-bound

volumes lie scattered about the room—new music, albums, annuals, half-cut reviews, and vases of flowers, intermingled in not ungraceful confusion, with the thousand little expensive trifles which a fashionable woman loves to collect around her. A lady, half-reclined on a sofa, listless and unoccupied, her eyes fixed on the fire; the blaze had caught the cheek turned to it, but the other side of her face was pale; and pale, one might have supposed, rather from late hours, than painful thoughts, were it not for the drooping attitude of her head, and the slight contraction of her brow. Her reverie was broken by a tap at the door.

"Come in," she said, in a voice which harmonised with the pensive refinement of her appearance.

A handsome, fashionable-looking man entered.

"How d'ye do?" he carelessly asked, throwing himself on the couch opposite to that occupied by the lady.

"Very well, I am much obliged to you," she answered, in the same tone of apparent good-humoured indifference: but one, skilled in interpreting the inflexions of the human voice would have detected displeasure and dislike lurking under the assumed carelessness of both the speakers.

"I wonder you did not go to hear Pasta last night, all the world was there," observed the gentleman. "Didn't you mention something about your wish of seeing the new opera, the last time I saw you?"

"Yes, I dare say I did," replied the lady; "but recollect that the last time I had the pleasure of seeing you is full three days ago; and then you, who have studied female nature so accurately, and so successfully, will not wonder at my having changed my mind."

"Certainly not—I neither wonder nor condemn; on the contrary, I consider woman's changeability as her greatest charm, as well as her highest privilege. What can be more tiresome or insipid than those women who are 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever'—you see I can quote Scripture, my fair wife. By the way, may I ask whether your cutting Lady Seaton the other night, at the Duchess of ——'s, is to be considered as part and parcel of the same charming vacillation of purpose which occasioned your cutting the Opera last night?"

"No;" replied the lady, in a quiet tone, but with a heightened colour; "I have cut the Opera merely for a night, whereas I have cut Lady Seaton for ever."

"Indeed!" said the gentleman, brushing up his hair at the mirror, and with affected indifference of manner, believed, however,

by the sarcastic curl of his lips. "If it be not an impertinent question, may I ask why?"

"Why?" repeated the lady, and her beautiful mouth wore the same scornful expression as that of her companion.

"Yes, why."

The lady gave a forced laugh, and the gentleman pushed in and out his lips.

"These little airs of disdain are quite bewitching, I confess, and would, to a lover, prove absolutely irresistible, but as I happen, unfortunately, to be only your husband, they are thrown away upon me. May I request then that you will favour me with an intelligible answer to an intelligible question: why do you intend cutting your friend Lady Seaton?"

"*Your* friend, you mean, my Lord."

"Well, granted she is my friend, is that a reason why you should reject her as an acquaintance?"

"Yes, a full and sufficient reason," the lady firmly replied. "If you were not always at her house, I might go there sometimes."

"All very romantic and interesting," observed the husband, yawning; "and quite in character for the heroine of a novel, or a young lady brought up by a maiden aunt, during the honey-moon; but rather too new in a woman of fashion after four years' marriage; these tender reproaches are, I must acknowledge *tant soit peu ridicules;* although it must be, of course, vastly flattering to my vanity, to find my lovely and admired wife still country girl enough to be jealous of me."

His cold and ironical smile was repaid by a glance of haughty indignation, as she exclaimed:

"Jealous of you? oh, no! that time has long past, my good Lord. No; in my refusal to associate with Lady Seaton, I am actuated by the same motive which would prevent my continuing acquaintanceship with any other married man's friend;—respect for myself."

"But Lady Seaton is received by all the world," Lord Glenville replied, in a tone of suppressed anger.

"Very possibly; all the world does not happen to know what I know of her."

"And do you imagine that it will be in your power to put out of society the most admired woman in London, yourself always, of course, excepted?" the Earl added, sarcastically.

"I do not want to put Lady Seaton out of society, I merely desire to exclude her from my own house."

"As your house happens also to be mine, I beg leave to enter my protest against that decree. While she is received anywhere else, she shall be received here," said Lord Glenville, in an easy unembarrassed tone of authority.

"Then, my Lord," replied his Lady, "it is fair to inform you that the day she enters your house I leave it."

"And so I must even take my choice between you? Sad alternative! I would fain be blessed with the presence of both," the gentleman sneered.

"My God! is it then come to this?" Lady Glenville murmured.

A thundering knock at the hall-door caused a momentary interruption in the matrimonial dialogue, and a footman soon after entered the room, and announced the Marquis of Tiverton.

The lady coloured, and the gentleman smiled.

"Show him up," he said.

"Into another room then, if you please," interrupted the lady; "I am not in tone to see company to-day."

"Ah the *cavalière servente* is never company, you know; *mais comme vous voudrez*," he replied, carelessly. "*Au plaisir, ma belle*," he nodded, as he left the room to receive his friend.

Lady Glenville started from her seat, and walked up and down in agitation.

"And is this the conclusion of a marriage of affection? After four years of outrage and insult, to be now thrust from his house, my husband's house; the house of the man I loved! Ah, how deeply, devotedly, and until lately—very lately—how undeviatingly! My God! have I deserved this?—Have I? Yes!" she added, suddenly sinking on her knees—"Yes! for in the day of my happiness I never bowed before Thee in gratitude; I never gave thanks for my blessings, nor prayed for their continuance. I was happy, and I cared not to enquire who had made me so. I did not even come to Thee in my sorrow. I sought consolation elsewhere for a wrung and wretched heart—sought, but never found it! My friends laughed, while I wept. From one being alone have I met sympathy; and from that sympathy, oh, my God! in mercy protect me now!"

She was still in the attitude of supplication when the door suddenly opened, and Lord Glenville and his friend entered. She arose hastily, and a deep flush of resentment and confusion overspread her face, as she glanced from her husband to his companion.

"*La belle dévote!*" exclaimed her Lord, ironically. Tiverton, confess I am the happiest husband you know. 'Tisn't every man

who when he unexpectedly enters his wife's boudoir, need only fear interrupting a flirtation with Heaven. How interesting to find her, before whom all knees bow in homage, herself bending the knee! What a pretty subject for a sonnet! 'On Lady G. praying.' We have plenty of verses on sleeping, singing, dancing, playing beauties, but not any, at least that I recollect, on a praying one. Now, there's a subject for your muse, Tiverton; talk it over with the fair devotee, while I go, for a minute, to Lady Seaton's," accompanying this studied insult by a glance of a strange sort of expression at his wife. It did not pass unobserved by her, for she happened at that moment to raise her eyes to his; and the colour, which had mounted to her face at his insult, suddenly left it at his glance.

"*Adieu, mon ami!* I shall meet you at five in the Park," said the fashionable husband, as he ran down stairs.

Lady Glenville had assumed her usual easy, unembarrassed manner, but although she talked of all the nothings of the day with more than her customary vivacity, it was evident to her companion, from the varying of her complexion, that her apparent spirits were the result of an inward struggle. He became abstracted, and there was a silence of a few moments, which was then broken by him.

"Something has discomposed you, this morning, Lady Glenville?"

"Why should you imagine so?" she asked.

"Again at your old habit of giving a question for an answer!" Lord Tiverton said, smiling. "And yet I would not, if I could, break you of it. 'Tis the natural recourse of an ingenuous mind, that will not give a false answer, and cannot give the true one; and, in its simplicity, imagines it has, by its artless device, baffled the curious enquirer. Ah, but you are a bad dissembler, Lady Glenville: 'you wear your heart upon your sleeve,' and you know what follows."

"Hush!" replied the lady playfully, though tears stood in her eyes. "Who talks of hearts in these days? What would become of your character as a man of fashion, if I were to say that I had heard you mention such a word?"

"Lady Glenville, something has agitated you, this morning, I am sure there has. I know you too well to be deceived. Allow me, then, the privilege of a sincere and attached friend, and give me your confidence. I may be able perhaps to explain for you, or even advise. You will at least believe me anxious to serve you; my ability to do so, alas! remains to be proved: but such as I am head and heart, you know that you can command me."

"I am obliged by your offer, my Lord; but there is no room for explanation—no need of counsel on the present occasion;" replied his companion. "Lord Glenville has signified to me his intention of forcing Lady Seaton on me, and I—"

"Oh, impossible! exclaimed the Marquis, interrupting her. "Impossible!—you mistake him."

"And I," the lady continued, "have signified to him my intention of leaving his house, if he does. Oh, no! I have not mistaken him!" she added, bitterly.

Lord Tiverton rose abruptly from his seat, and paced the room in much agitation. Suddenly he stopped:—

"And when you leave Glenville, where will you go, while awaiting the preliminary arrangements for your future maintenance? Your mother is not in town, and even if she were, you know how little she is able to enter into your feelings—your virtuous feelings—of what is due to a wife. Then your sister—"

"I know all you would say, my Lord," interrupted Lady Glenville. "I do not require to be reminded that I stand alone in the world," she added, mournfully.

"Alone in the world!" he exclaimed, taking a seat near her; "no, not while I remain in it!" Then lowering his voice into a whisper; "there is one house, at least, which would open wide to receive you, one heart, where you would be enshrined, worshipped; a heart consecrated to you alone. One, I will not say worthy of you, but at least more worthy than his who would prefer a Lady Seaton to you. Try a new fate—you are unhappy—neglected. Try a new fate, beloved Isabel!" he murmured tenderly, endeavouring gently to unlock one of the clasped hands between which her head was buried.

She withdrew her hand, but it was cold and trembling; and when she looked up at him, her face was deadly pale.

"Leave me, Marquis of Tiverton!" she said, slowly and solemnly. "We can never meet again. Leave me, my Lord," for he still hesitated. "Leave me at once, and for ever; I know you at last!"

She rang the bell. "I wish your Lordship good morning," she added, as a servant attended the Marquis to his carriage.

"Ah, Glenville! were you demon enough to plan this!" Isabel exclaimed, when once again alone. "Oh, yes! yes—I read it in the cold, heartless triumph of that glance—that parting look. Yes! Glenville, you *were* demon enough to plan this. You, my husband, my protector, who vowed before God to love and to cherish me. You would have betrayed me to degradation. And is this plotter

against the honour of his own wife the man who was once *my* Warringdon? the man I worshipped, alas! more than ever I did my God! I am punished. My idol has fallen; and it has crushed me, even while I knelt before it! And now the last frail reed on which I leaned for human sympathy is broken. Tiverton, too, plotted against me—the tempter who offered balm for the throbbing, tortured heart, and, behold! the balm was poison! Ah, Marquis of Tiverton, you are revenged. When you were only George Damer, with a thousand a year, you loved me, and I was inclined to love you.—But, my mother! Ah, no! I will be honest with myself at least. My own ambition, my own worldliness whispered, I might do better, and I listened to those bad counsellors, and stifled my growing attachment. You are revenged, Tiverton;—I love you now. Ay—to my own conscience, and to my God, I will confess that grievous, sinful secret. The woman who, from ambition, would not allow herself to love you, when her love would have been virtue, now that she has attained all which in her worldliness she coveted, would give up all and follow you, were you again George Damer, and she Isabel Wilmot—over the world! And the woman who says this is now the wife of another! Are you not revenged, Marquis of Tiverton? And is not my punishment, oh, my God! greater than I can bear, though not greater than I deserve!"

The footman who entered about an hour after Lord Tiverton's departure, found his Lady lying on the floor, in a state of insensibility. She was carried to her own room, and the next morning was in a brain fever, attended by three physicians, and the papers rang with a recent matrimonial *fracas* in high life, and of the consequent dangerous indisposition of a lovely Countess, and the *not* consequent despair of her noble Lord.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Much to Lord Glenville's disappointment, his Lady did not die, although she had three physicians, and, as soon as she recovered consciousness, a clergyman, attending her.

"She must feel herself going, since she sends for a clergyman," thought her loving Lord. A month passed, and Lady Glenville was still confined to her room, but able to sit up for a few hours.

Her own woman brought her the cards and notes of enquiry, left during her illness; the greatest number of both were from the Marquis of Tiverton.

"The Marquis, my Lady, used to call four and five times a day, to ask after your Ladyship," said the woman. "I don't think he was very well himself, either, my Lady; he was looking so pale and wan, you would hardly have known him, my Lady. Every body was remarking it."

"Indeed! I am sorry to hear it, Edwards. Have you happened, by chance, to learn how he is now?" enquired the Lady, with a struggle for composure.

"Oh, yes, my Lady, he is now pretty well again: I saw him yesterday, and he desired his best compliments to your Ladyship, and begged I would hand you this note."

Lady Glenville's first impulse was to refuse receiving the note, but she recollected how strange this would appear to the woman; she took it, therefore, and broke the seal with trembling fingers, and a beating heart. The characters were evidently tracedin haste and agitation, and they ran thus:—

"Your woman tells me that you are, at length, able to sit up, and are recovering strength. You are nominally the sufferer, and yet I have suffered more than you:—you lay, happily, insensible to either bodily or mental anguish, while I felt for you all that you did not feel for yourself: I bore your and my own weight of trouble at the same time. You have banished me from your presence, Isabel, but I cannot banish you from my heart. In a few weeks I shall leave England:—I have some idea of a journey overland to Persia. I require to break new ground; and, as it is possible, in my present state of health, that I may never return, will you allow me to see you, for a few minutes, before I depart?"

"No, no, no!" murmured the Lady, (she had previously disembarrassed herself of Edward's presence,) "I must not I dare not again meet you, Tiverton. No: it would be a presumptuous tempting of my fate. No! when I was, as I thought, dying, I prayed to be enabled to root out of my heart my sinful love for you, and I am sure He heard me. It may not be done in a month, nor even a year, but, with His help, it will be done before I die, at least. Oh, I trust, I trust it will! No, although you are leaving, and, perhaps, for ever, your native land, I will not see you. No! although in losing you, I lose the only human being who cares about me, for you *do* love me, I believe, as well as man *can* love. It *was* love still, it was something to cling to, and"—

Edwards here bustled into the room.

"I have good news for you, my Lady."

"Good news for me?" repeated Isabel, pensively.

"Lady Anne is just arrived in town, at Lord Rochford's, and has sent to know if you can see her. She has travelled all the way from Rome, post haste, on seeing the accounts in the papers, of your Ladyship's illness."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Lady Glenville, bursting into tears. "That was like a mother! Oh, my mother! this is very good of you."

In a few minutes afterwards, Lady Anne entered her daughter's room. The mother's countenance was nearly as tranquil as usual, while her child lay almost convulsed, from contending feelings, in her arms.

"Dearest, dearest mother, you pity me, do you not?" she murmured. "Oh! I know you do, for you have come to me, when every body else deserts me. You love your poor Isabel still! Oh, yes, still, still!" and each broken sentence was accompanied by a fresh burst of tears, and a closer embrace.

"My dear Isabel, pray compose yourself, do, my sweet child! Agitation is so bad for you in your present delicate state. I shall be obliged to leave you, if you are not more tranquil; I shall, indeed, my love, that's a dear girl. So, sit down, and we will chat a little together. And now, my dear Isabel," continued Lady Anne, when her daughter had recovered her composure, "do tell me what this quarrel with Glenville is really about. I have read and heard such various versions of it; all agree, however, in blaming you as precipitate and *exigeante*. Now, my love, let me hear your story."

Isabel recapitulated all the circumstances of which the reader is already in possession. Lady Anne listened very composedly to the recital, and when it was ended, asked,

"And is that all you have to complain of, my love?"

"All?" repeated her daughter.

"My dear Isabel, is Glenville the only inconstant husband in the world?"

"My dear mother, he is not. But he is the only man who would force his wife to receive his—"

"Oh, nonsense, my dear, why couldn't you take the matter as quiety as Lord Seaton did?"

"Then, in my place, you would have received her?"

"Certainly,—sooner let her in, than put myself out,—it is not too late yet. Your uncle Rochford has sounded Glenville, and

on your agreeing to receive Lady Seaton, he will overlook your hastiness, and—"

"Never!" interrupted Isabel,—"never—never,—will I live under that man's roof one hour longer than I can help;—"*he* overlook *my* hastiness!" she exclaimed, starting up in indignation. "He, the tyrant and traitor!—the smiling, polite tyrant,—and base, cold-blooded traitor!—*he* talk to *me* of forgiveness!—Listen to *me* mother. Suppose I were mean enough, nay, and vicious enough to associate with Lady Seaton; suppose I would forget and forgive, on her account, aye, and on account of other outrages and insults, heaped upon me, and boasted of to my very face, for the last three years,—I never can forget or forgive, his devilish project of *that* day; when he goaded me to madness, and then drove me to the brink of a precipice.—God! and does my mother tell me I should live with a demon like this?"

"My dear Isabal, you agitate me as well as yourself," replied the tranquil Lady Anne, "by all this vehemence. I give you my opinion, and that of every body who has heard the story. And I most earnestly recommend you to consider well what you are about. Do not, I implore you, give way to temper, in this crisis of your own fate. You are now at the head of a splendid fortune, you have rank, fashion, beauty, every thing this world can offer; dearest child, thousands envy you the brilliant lot you are about to cast away in a moment of caprice. My sweet Isabel, be persuaded by me! What will a few hundreds a year be to you, accustomed to thousands?—And the world will be sure to turn its back upon you when you are only *poor* Lady Glenville. Oh, dear child, you will find a terrible change in people then!"

"Oh, I have not now to learn what the world is made of," answered Isabel, "I am disgusted with it." After a pause she continued, "as my uncle Rochford offered to *intercede* for me with Lord Glenville, perhaps he would have no objection to confer with him relative to a respectable maintenance. I ask no more, and even that much with reluctance; I would fain owe him nothing," she added, sighing.

"And where do you purpose living?" asked the mother.

"When I leave my husband's house, will it not be natural to return to my father's?" asked Isabel, timidly.

"My dear Isabel, if your husband had really turned you out, your father's house would open to receive you. But as you voluntarily quit the man you have vowed to love and honour, I cannot, according to my conscience, support you in your defiance of duty

to God, and respect for the world. I never will receive again,—at least under such circumstances, as an inmate, a daughter I have married well."

Isabel's lips quivered; and her heart sickened, but she made no reply. Lady Anne soon after left her daughter, to return to dinner at Lord Rochford's.

Lady Glenville took up the Pocket-Bible that lay near her bedside, and chanced to open it at the words, "When my father and mother forsake me, he taketh me up."

She threw herself on her knees, and wept bitterly.

CHAPTER XXV.

A TRAVELLING carriage stood, some days afterwards, before the door of Glenville House.

A lady, very pale and thin, descended the steps, supported by two gentlemen, and followed by a female attendant. She was handed into the carriage by the younger gentleman.

"You have a fine day for your journey," he remarked.

"Yes, very!" she replied.

"I believe all is now ready," said the elder gentleman. "You have not forgotten anything, Edwards?"

"No, my Lord, nothing."

"Then you had better set off, or you will not reach Canterbury till late. Good-by, my dear Isabel," and he touched coldly the pale cheek of the traveller.

"Good-by, dear uncle, and many thanks and apologies for the trouble you have taken about me."

"Glenville," she added, extending a hand to the other gentleman, "I wish you well," and her voice slightly faltered.

He smiled, and nodded. The footman, after having closed the carriage door, mounted the box, the coachman touched his horses, and the carriage was soon out of sight.

The travellers stopped for the night at Canterbury. Lady Glenville was lying on a sofa near the fire, gazing on the bright flame, in one of those fits of abstraction, in which we have before surprised her; one arm still fair, but no longer rounded, lying listless by her side, and the other holding a small volume, when the

door opened, and a waiter entered, to inform her that a gentleman, on very particular business, wished to see her. Before she had time to reply, a tall man, wrapped in a cloak, stood in the doorway. Scarcely looking at him, she motioned him to a seat, quietly awaiting an explanation for this intrusion.

"You are much changed, Lady Glenville," the stranger observed.

Isabel started at the sound of that voice, and now gazed intently on the speaker; she gasped for breath, and her head drooped on her shoulder. When restored to consciousness, the first object which met her eyes was that of a well known figure kneeling by her side.

At first her gaze was vague and bewildered, like that of one awakened suddenly from a dream; then it became earnest and searching. "Why have you come here?" she asked.

"To see you."

"To see me!—But have I not already refused to be seen by you? What right have you," she added, making an effort to recover her self-possession, "to force yourself thus into my presence?"

"What right have I? The right of affection, Lady Glenville. Isabel, look at me!—Am I not changed too,—aye, as much as yourself, since last we met? Why am I thus changed? because of my love for you. When you became ill, I became ill,—when you suffered, I suffered, and you ask me, as you would a common acquaintance, what right I have unbidden to enter your presence,—what right!" he repeated vehemently.

"Is it generous to pursue me thus? I appeal to yourself, Tiverton, is it?"

"Well, why did you refuse to see me before?—Why, tell me why?"

"Because I never will voluntarily find myself a second time in the company of the man who had once before insulted me."

"Insulted you, Isabel! But we will not dispute about the justice of that rather harsh term; granted, however, that I had insulted you on a former occasion, you had not to fear a repetition of the offence, as I had previously intimated my intention of leaving the country, perhaps for ever, and I merely requested permission to take leave of you; and yet that humble request you refused, and you tell me your motive for so doing was resentment for my previous misconduct. But, Isabel, that was not your motive; the reason you refused to see me, and the only one was, because you doubted yourself."

Isabel's hand was on the bell, when it was caught by Lord

Tiverton. "You will only make a scene, Lady Glenville, for I warn you that the first man who enters the room I will thrust out of it. I am determined you shall hear me, and then a word from your lips will be sufficient to dismiss me: was it not so before? Your womanly pride and dignity are up in arms, I know they are, against my audacity for presuming to think, much less to say, that you do not abhor me as you try to persuade me and yourself that you do. It might, perhaps, have been better policy to have appeared a more humble adorer; but I wish to lay bare my whole heart to you, defects and all, and then, Isabel, decide, whether that heart deserves to be cherished, or trampled on!

"In one respect, at least, you will allow, I differ from the many admirers by whom, during your married life, you have been surrounded. I had loved, and sought you, as Isabel Wilmot. I did not wait to see you the property of another, to discern your merit. Others bowed down before Lady Glenville, the idol of fashion; but I loved the woman in which I discovered those qualities, now are so eagerly proclaimed by all, when she was yet but a young aspirant for notice. I saw where, and how, and why, she differed from the throng of bold or vapid fashionable accomplished candidates for brilliant establishments, which thronged the ball and concert-rooms. I saw, and loved, the simplicity, and yet acuteness, of her mind, the truth, the affection, the spirited, yet gentle nature, her polished vivacity, her deeply feeling heart. I spoke to her of a retirement in a remote, but beautiful part of England, of the happiness and utility of a country life; of the interest of a home, where affection and intelligence preside,—but Isabel, your mother had already spoiled the fair materials entrusted to her; worldliness had even then crept into that young heart, and stifled its generous impulses." 'Shame!' said I to myself, 'on the woman who rejects a true love, because it comes not encircled in a coronet, or shines not with the tinsel of fashion!' From that hour I became a changed man, dissipated, almost heartless. I went abroad with my regiment, years passed away. I heard of your marriage with Warringdon, and I confess, heard it with perfect indifference;—so, thought I, she has at length attained the object of her ambition.

"Not very long afterwards, I unexpectedly succeeded to a title, and returned to England. I saw that you devotedly loved your husband, and you began to rise in my estimation; but I also very soon perceived that you were neglected by him, and in consequence unhappy. You then immediately became an object of unworthy speculation to others; and I admired the easy contempt with which

you treated their pretensions,—I insensibly fell back on my former feelings for you, but I was guarded in the expression of them; you will admit that I never passed the prescribed bounds, till the day Glenville left us together. When he banished you from his house, I offered you mine. I offered you myself too, my fortune, and my name, you rejected all, and dismissed me from your presence, and then, Isabel, I looked upon you not merely as the most engaging woman I had ever met, but as one to be worshipped for the energy of character which, in the midst of sorrow and insult, could remain firm to the stern command of duty, and could courageously, spurn the tempter, though he came in the form of the man you loved, for I knew you did love me. I heard that you were ill, dangerously ill; in agony, I waited the result,—you recovered,—I begged to see you—and you refused, I ascertained the day of your departure for Dover, and I set off, and awaited your arrival in this town," he paused.

"And what good do you propose either to me or to yourself, by this step?" asked Lady Glenville.

He was silent a moment. "Isabel, when first I declared my love, you did well to reject it; for it was not then perfectly worthy of you, besides, you were not then assured of its sincerity. And again, there still remained a hope of accommodation with your husband, you had still a mother, relations, friends, acquaintances,—you had much, much to give up; but now you are separated from your husband; you are censured by your friends, deserted by your acquaintances, abandoned even by your own mother. You are going abroad on an income of six hundred a year, alone, you have no child, or interest in life.

"Isabel, what is the world, or the world's laws to you? Have you not already known and felt its nothingness? Of all those who fluttered about you, in the sunshine of your existence, who is there that comes to cheer you now, or bring hope and consolation? The brilliant Lady Glenville is forgotten by all but one, the man who loved her even in her childhood, seven years ago. Ought not that man to be more to you, than a heartless worthless world, ought he not, Isabel?"

"Yes! more, much more than this world, with all its honours, and all its splendours, would you be to me, if this world were all that stood between us;—but there is one thing dearer to me than the world's opinion, my own self-respect, and there is one Being dearer to me than you,—and that being is my God. Oh, had I known him earlier, I should have been spared all I suffer at this

moment, for the feelings I now sacrifice in obedience to his will, in that case, never could have arisen, or at least, never have abided in my heart."

"Do you then reject my love, my sincere, devoted, unchanged, and unchangeable love? do you indeed prefer going alone through the world, Isabel? and is the wretchedness I shall endure, nothing to you, Isabel? think again! and well, before you doom me and yourself to a life of misery."

"Tiverton, have you ever read this book?" she asked, handing him the little volume that lay by her.

"I cannot say that I have."

"Well, when you have read it, and carefully read it, and after you have prayed over it, come to me again and ask why I doom you and myself, to a life of misery. Tiverton; if you had read that book, you would not have come as a tempter to the afflicted. Go travel, as you propose, think, and above all, pray, and then return to your country, and marry;" her voice here faltered for a moment, but she recovered her composure and proceeded. "But let not your wife be the daughter of a worldly mother.

"And now," she added, holding out her hand, "I will bid you farewell."

But he still lingered.

"Nay, 'tis useless, Tiverton, my mind is made up! God bless you, and forget me."

"Would I could!" he replied, in a voice hoarse from emotion, "but that can never be!—No, I love you as I shall never love again; I honour you as I never honoured before! No, Isabel, I can never forget you!"

He pulled his hat over his brows, and, almost dashing her hand from him, left the room.

Isabel sank back on the sofa, where she lay some time so pale and motionless, one might have almost doubted that she breathed, were it not for the low stiffled sob, which, at intervals, escaped her.

The next day, Lady Glenville had a relapse, and was unable to proceed on her journey.

CHAPTER XXVI.

And now will the reader travel with us to Paris, and having been set down in the Rue Castilione, enter a *première* lighted up, and filled with company, composed of all that is distinguished by rank or talent, among the various nations of Europe;—poets, politicians, artists, mathematicians, generals, philosophers, and foreign ambassadors, he will there find assembled. Nor is the attraction of beauty wanting to complete the animation and embellishment of the rooms. Each lady has her little circle of admirers. But the largest group of this kind is, strange to say, formed round the plainest woman of the company. It is fair to state, however, that she is also the hostess.

Almost every sentence she utters is followed by a laugh, or a bravo! from the gentlemen by whom she is surrounded, as she turns from the Frenchman to the Italian, from the Spaniard to the German, and addresses to each, in his own language, a few words, which are either sportive, profound, or enthusiastic, according to the pursuit and turn of mind of her auditor. Yet, while charming those around her by her wit, or her eloquence, there is in her manner, at least, no attempt at display, no consciousness of power. She is brilliant, indeed, because she cannot be otherwise; and would have been equally so by her own fire-side.

A gentleman, who had just entered the room, advanced towards her.

"Well? have you found him?" the lady asked, in a low hurried tone.

"Yes! after a long search, I have at length traced him to a café, in the Palais Royal, where, for the last three days and nights, he has been drinking and gambling with a set of low English blacklegs. I represented to him the cruelty of leaving home, for days, without having previously announced to his wife his intention of absenting himself; and I tried to persuade him to return with me. But I am sorry to say, could not succeed."

"And what motive did he give? what answer?" enquired the lady.

"Oh! the usual answer to all argument, all entreaty! A laugh."

The lady bit her lips, and looked thoughtful for a moment, but only for a moment; she quickly resumed her usual carelessness of demeanour. "Come, Sir Robert, give me your arm into the music room."

A few minutes afterwards, a voice of extraordinary power and compass, of thrilling expression, and clear and rapid execution, filled the apartments, and called forth on every side bursts of applause, even from professors of the art.

"What an uncommonly clever woman that is!"—observed a young man, to the gentleman that the lady of the house had called Sir Robert. "But what is the reason, Turner, that Barham never appears at his wife's parties? It looks odd, people say they don't live well together; that he thinks her ugly, and she thinks him silly. But nobody that I know has ever seen him. I understand he keeps odd company; your father was his guardian, was he not?"

Sir Robert bowed.

"Well, you ought, in that case, to be able to tell something about him?—Is he really a fool?"

"His wife has certainly somewhat the advantage of him in point of intellect," answered Sir Robert, drily.

"I admire your caution, Turner," said his companion, smiling. "Singular, too, considering your position in the *ménage*."

"How do you mean?" asked Sir Robert.

His companion again smiled. "So you have never heard what people say of yourself, and the English Corinne here? Of the brilliant wife and accomplished friend of poor silly Barham?"

Sir Robert Turner fixed his eyes steadily on the speaker.

"There is one subject upon which I never permit a jest, and that is, when a lady is concerned. The first person, therefore, that you hear talking of Mrs. Barham, in any way but that of admiration and respect, refer him to me," and he immediately turned the conversation.

No one, throughout the evening, could have guessed, from Mrs. Barham's manner, as she sang, danced, or talked, that her spirits were disturbed.

At length, much to the regret of all but the lady herself, her rooms began to thin, and finally, of all the guests, none but Sir Robert remained.

"Will you come with me to the café, where he is?" she abruptly asked. "I will speak with him myself."

Turner, greatly surprised, endeavoured to dissuade her—but she insisted, and accordingly they drove to the café. He alighted, and entered the house, where, after remaining about half an hour, he returned to the carriage without Barham.

"I cannot induce him to come to you. I fear he is utterly lost," he said, in a tone of sorrow.

Maria jumped out of the carriage.

"Shew me the way to the room where he is," she said, hurriedly.

"My dear Madam, you are not surely going among those fellows! It is not a scene fit for a lady."

"The worse they are, the greater the necessity of getting him away from them," she replied.

"But it will be in vain; nothing you can say will make the slightest impression on him. Pray, do not think of exposing your feelings to this useless travail, he has become quite implacable of late."

But Mrs. Barham insisted, and he led the way. Having opened the door of the apartment pointed out to her, she stood a moment on the threshold, to try and distinguish her husband among the group of coarse, slang-looking men, by whom he was surrounded. His face was flushed, his whole manner that of a low, foolish profligate, playing, and losing, and alternately laughing and swearing vehemently at his ill-fortune.

Mrs. Barham had approached near enough to touch her husband's elbow, before he was aware of her entrance, so completely absorbed was he by what was passing at the table.

He turned suddenly round, "Ah, is that you? What brings you here?"

"Come with me, for a moment, to the door," she replied. "I wish to speak a few words with you."

"Well, don't keep me long, then, for I am very busy just now," he said, following his wife out of the room.

"Barham, why have you not come home for three days?"

"Because I did not choose it," he replied. "I had a mind for some fun. Do you think I am going to ask your leave, whenever I may like to have a lark?"

"Why not at least tell me where you could be found? Why leave me for days uncertain what had become of you?"

"And if I had, Turner would have been after me, dogging me every place I went. He thinks because his old father kept me in leading strings once upon a time, that I am going to let him do the same now. But he will find himself mistaken."

"My dear Barham, I do not want to keep you in leading strings, I assure you," observed Turner, quietly. "I merely offer you advice, which you are at liberty, of course, to accept or reject, as you please; but which, for the sake of the old friendship subsisting between our families, however ungraciously you may receive it, I shall continue to offer. I can have no object in view but your own welfare."

"Aye, aye, I believe as much of that as I like," replied Barham, with a loud laugh. "That is always your gammon; but I am not such a spooney as you take me for."

Turner shrugged his shoulders contemptuously. "Well, my good fellow, though you will not listen to my advice, will you listen to your wife?"

"Thank you! I am not going to make a Jerry-Sneak of myself, I can tell you that for your comfort. No, no, I am my own master, and I'll do as I like; so let her keep her advice for somebody who wants it. At Cralcourt she badgered me because I had a few running horses, and betted a little; and because I had hounds, and used to like a bit of fun with my grooms and huntsmen; and now I am here, she keeps poking at me, because I dine with a few friends. Ever since I married it has been the same thing; she is always finding fault, whatever I do; and for that matter, she has no right to do so"—

"No? has not a wife a right to remonstrate with a husband?" asked Mrs. Barham.

"Yes, if a man marries out of his own head; it is all very well then. One may bear a little teazing, when one has brought a trouble upon oneself—that is all fair enough."

"What do you mean, Barham? I don't understand you," said Turner.

"Ah, she understands me," he replied, doggedly.

Turner glanced at Maria.

Could the woman he now saw standing humiliated, as a wife, before a drunken fool, be the same brilliant, animated, self-possessed, intellectual creature, that had dazzled a circle of accomplished judges?

"My God! what a fate for such a being! he said to himself, as he observed her colour rise at her husband's taunt. Maria had, however, too much habitual command over her feelings, to notice the speech.

"Well, my dear Barham," said she, "I have listened to you; will you now attend to me?"

"Yes; but don't make a long preachment of it, for I want to go back to my friends."

"You accuse me of badgering you," Mrs. Barham continued, "but how was that? have I ever used an unkind word, or even an impatient one? Have I, Barham?

"I don't say you have; but you were always reminding me that I ought not to do this, that, or the other; advising, advising,

from morning till night, instead of making me laugh as you used to do. I did not marry to go to school, you may be sure. You were always telling me what a pleasant house you would keep, if I would but come to Paris. Well, I did, and you crammed it with clever people, and then wonder I don't like to stay at home!"

"Dear Barham, then there shall be no more clever people at the house, if they keep you always from it. Can I say more than that? In return, all I request of you is this:—to ask to your house, not to a café, whatever company you please: or, at least, to tell me, when you leave home, how long you intend remaining absent. Is that fair, or not?"

"I told you before, I have a mind for fun, sometimes," replied Barham.

"Well, and cannot you have the fun at home?" enquired his wife.

"Oh, no, I can't. What fun can one have with a wife stuck up near one? Oh, no; you go your way, and I go mine, and we shall always agree very well."

"But, Barham, your way is leading you, fast and sure, to ruin. You cannot have fun without money—what will you do when it is all spent?" asked Maria.

"Oh, that time is a good way off, yet," he replied, laughing.

"Not so distant as you think. Remember what you owed before you left England, and how much you are losing every night at play, and"——

"Oh, d——n it! there you are, again, at the old story!" he exclaimed, bursting impatiently from her, and returning to his party.

"Oh, why did I marry a fool!" exclaimed Maria, throwing herself into the carriage. "My God! to think of being tied for life to a creature like that! a creature that cannot be made even to feel for himself! And *I* to be obliged to bend low to *him!* to be obliged to suppress my indignation at his insults, and my contempt at his folly, in order, if possible, to keep him within bounds! My unfortunate child! what is to become of her?"

"What other woman could have sustained herself at all, under such a fate?" asked Sir Robert. "How I do respect and admire you!"

"Respect and admire!" Maria repeated, with bitterness: "Oh, no, you despise me;—you would despise the woman who merely consented to marry a fool because he was rich; how much more must you despise her who planned and plotted to marry him! Barham spoke but the truth when he said he never wanted to marry

me. I deserved the taunt, and, therefore, I was obliged to bear it patiently, humbly. Ah! little does the world know, while I talk and laugh, how I writhe under the deep, deep, humiliation, the unutterable and innumerable mortifications of my lot! Insulted by a creature I despise; married to a man I am ashamed to acknowledge! You will wonder, perhaps, why I go into the world, at all, under such circumstances: but I should lose my senses if I did not, sometimes, force my thoughts into another direction. Besides, when in society, such as that of to-night, I forget that I am Barham's wife, I feel a momentary triumph in the mind which enables me to rise above the degradation—the contemptible position that, at other times, bows down my spirit to the earth. And, then, the remorse I feel! the remorse, when I think that, had Barham married some pretty girl he liked, he might have turned out differently. To think that I have the wreck of his fate to answer for, as well as my own miserable accountability!"

"And is this the woman the world represents as unfeeling?" exclaimed her companion, half aloud.

"I cannot wonder that it should," observed Maria, "for I long thought that I was so myself."

"But I never did," said Turner. "I judged more favourably, and, as it has proved, more correctly, of you, than either yourself or the world had done. I early saw that your nature had been disturbed, and put out of its place; that you had been so often told you had no sensibility, and had been so carefully instructed to glory in your callousness, as a proof of the superiority of your understanding, that you had, at length, become temporarily, owing to your tuition, the worldly-hardened character your teachers persuaded you that you were, from original disposition. But I could not believe that one, so beloved in her neighbourhood, of whom I heard so many acts of charity, kindness, and generosity, could be wanting, essentially, in a feeling heart. No, I could never believe that possible, and I was right. I never could believe that God would have given such an intellect without giving a heart. You were not merely intended to dazzle, but to bless. You were intended for a higher and a better vocation than the one allotted you by your mother."

"And yet, perhaps, she was not so much to blame, after all," observed Maria, "according to the opinions she held. For, intent as she was upon marrying her daughters well, and seeing me unattractive in person, and, therefore, unlikely to succeed, as it is called, unless pushed forward, she found herself necessarily com-

pelled to stifle my sensibility, lest it should interfere with my judgment, and prevent my taking proper measures to secure a good 'establishment.'"

"And so you married Barham because your mother persuaded you that you were not a woman to be loved? My God! if we had but met sooner!" he cried, impulsively.

The carriage just then stopped at the door of her house, and Mrs. Barham appeared also agitated.

"I overheard your exclamation," she said, in a low voice.

"And it has offended you?"

"I will be candid with you in all things. No, it has not offended, but it has grieved, me, because I must no longer meet you as I have done.'

"Forget what I said,—it escaped me unintentionally, I solemnly assure you—forget!"

"I cannot forget any thing you ever said, Turner," replied Maria; "besides, I have been already informed that we are commented on. Yet, while I felt there existed no grounds for censure, I was reluctant to give up the society of a tried and valued friend, because fools talked, and I therefore deferred, from day to day, coming to a decision. I have always had too little respect for the opinion of others, but——"

"But," interrupted Turner, "if you saw no necessity this morning for our separation, why should any thing I have said to-night cause you to alter your opinion? You do not judge of me as a mere man of the world, I hope, nor of yourself as a giddy woman. Why may we not meet as heretofore, I promising never again to express a vain, and, what is worse, a criminal, regret, with regard to the past, and you undertaking to forgive and forget what has been said? I do not ask to be allowed to come as often to your house as formerly, for I am aware my visits have been remarked, and I intended, in consequence, withdrawing myself, in a degree, from your society. You will allow me, however, will you not, occasionally, to see you?"

"Better not, for some time, at least," replied Maria. "It is not that I think so badly of you, or so meanly of myself, as to *fear* you. But it subjects to a strong and disadvantageous contrast one that I am bound, as much as possible, to regard, and will make my duty still more irksome than it is. I shall leave Paris for a few weeks. Meantime, persuade, if you can, poor Barham to play and drink less, and, when I return, you will probably be setting out for England.—Good night, and God bless you till we meet again."

Turner was silent for a few moments, and the usually calm ex-

pression of his countenance was much disturbed. "You are right," he said, at length, and turned from the door.

Maria hurried up stairs to her own room, and thence to an adjoining apartment. She noiselessly approached a bed, where a child lay asleep, calling, through its slumbers, on its mother.

"My darling!" she exclaimed passionately, "your mother is near you. Pure, innocent creature!" she continued, kneeling by the bed-side, while tears trickled down her cheeks, "you first taught me that I had a heart! My child, my all, in this world! the only being that loves me, and that I love, except——, but, hush, I must not even think of *him*, *here*, by *her* bed-side. And yet", she continued, unwittingly pursuing the very train of thought she had, the instant before condemned, "is it my fault, if I love him? against a brilliant or insinuating man of the world, I should have been upon my guard; but how could I be prepared for gradual, scarcely perceptible, influence of active, undeviating, intelligent goodness, of generosity, disinterestedness unbounded, and unostentatious benevolence? How could I imagine that there was sin, or danger, in esteeming one, whom his equals honoured, and the poor adored? And the first prayer that I ever uttered from the heart, was it not at his suggestion, when my child was ill? Oh! if I had been his wife! Three months after I quitted Ireland, with Barham, he came into our neighbourhood!—But no, the woman who could sell herself for gold was not worthy of a better fate! I do not complain—I deserve it all, and more."

CHAPTER XXVII.

A MONTH passed, and Mrs. Barham returned from her tour. Several letters had arrived during the interval, but which had not been forwarded, from uncertainty as to her address, in her movements from place to place. Among the number now laid before her was one of an old date from her mother, informing her of Isabel's quarrel with her husband, and of her approaching separation; throwing the whole blame, as was to be expected from her tone with Lady Glenville herself, on her daughter; announcing her firm determination of leaving her, for the future, to her whims and

absurdities; and mentioning her daughter's appeal to her protection, and her refusal.

"She shall have mine then!" exclaimed Maria. "Isabel, you wronged your sister, when you did not write to tell her that you wanted a home.—Yes, for, even in my most selfish and hardened days, I should not have given you the answer your mother gave. Oh, I wish I had received this letter before. Isabel will think me so barbarous never to have taken any notice of her all this time.—And now, where will a letter reach her? For, according to the date of my mother's communication, she must have already left Glenville House,—and ill too,—poor Isabel!" She was sitting down to write to her sister, under cover to Lady Anne, when a letter, just come by the post, was handed her. It was from Edwards, Lady Glenville's woman, informing her of her sister's illness at Canterbury, and that her Lady having strictly forbidden her communicating the intelligence to her mother, she dared not disobey her commands; although very uneasy at so heavy a responsibility resting upon herself alone: she therefore took the liberty of letting Mrs. Barham know Lady Glenville's dangerous state, and begging her instructions how to act.

That evening Maria and her little girl were on the road to England.

Nothwithstanding all the precautions which tenderness could suggest, to prepare Lady Glenville for a meeting with her sister, the agitation had nearly proved fatal to her.

"You will live with me, will you not, my own dear Isabel?"

Lady Glenville leaned her head on her sister's bosom, and for some moments neither of them spoke.

"Yes!" Isabel replied at length, "*if* I live it shall be with you, Maria. I wish I had known you sooner and better. I should not have been thrown on the dangerous sympathy of another. I never did you justice, Maria!"

"A great change has come over me," said Maria, "since we were girls together, I have learned to feel—the great barrier that used to separate our minds is removed. My character has been softened, and your's strengthened, by the few years of our married lives. We can now be, what we never were before,—sisters in heart! counselling, sympathizing friends!—On *one* subject only we will never speak, because it is one we must not even think upon."

"True," replied Isabel. "But to keep a constant and effectual watch over our thoughts we shall need assistance. Do you ever pray, Maria?"

"No, but I will;" her sister answered, pressing her hand.

"Your child shall be mine; we will educate her together; and God grant she may have a happier fate than either of her mothers!" said Isabel, throwing her arms round her adopted child.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

We will now pass over five years, and beg the reader to return once more to Wilmot Castle, Lady Anne and her husband are sitting together.

"Now, is not that ridiculous? Maria, of all people upon earth, to set up for sentiment! She marries a man she cares nothing about, because he has a good fortune. Well, he loses his fortune—his estate is sold—he goes mad out of a fit of drunkenness, and the world won't persuade her to send him at once, quietly, to a proper place of confinement. 'He would be treated cruelly,' she says, so she insists on taking care of him herself. To talk in that way, she must be as mad as he is. I have no patience with such nonsense—is it not provoking, Wilmot?"

"Why, as Maria has patience, I think we may. I am only sorry she has such a miserable lot!" replied the father.

"And Isabel encourages her in the scheme—applauds it of all things. Such an account as Rochford gives of them!—he was down in their neighbourhood some weeks since,—it is really melancholy to think of it. They are become regular Methodists!—teach charity children their catechism, and make flannel petticoats for old women! My dear Wilmot, I am really astonished how you can laugh at such conduct."

"Why, my dear Anne, I think that they are, of the two, better employed even in 'making flannel petticoats for old women' than in flirting with young men. By the way, who was it that Tiverton married?"

"Lord knows! some nobody or other he chose for her piety. Rochford wrote me word. I never thought much of his sense,—but, however, I am sorry now I formerly discouraged his addresses to Isabel. Yet how could I foresee his uncle and three cousins would die, and make him a Marquis? I did all for the best," said Lady Anne, with a sigh.

"Do you know what would have been better than 'doing for the best,' as you call it, my dear Anne?"

"What?" asked his wife.

"To have done nothing at all."

Lady Anne paused, and then said, "You are right."

THE END.

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